Gnosis as Inner Religion

CRYSTAL
SERIES

GNOSIS AS INNER RELIGION

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CRYSTAL SERIES 2

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Preface

This book about the Gnosis is a collection of articles that the pupils of the Spiritual School of the Rosycross have published in the School's periodical, the Pentagram, over the past years. Each article is a reflection of an individual experience with the Gnosis as a living spiritual reality. All these articles together do not, therefore, present a systematic philosophical explanation of the Gnosis, but rather give a survey of its multiple aspects: the historical and the modern Gnosis, the Gnosis as a spiritual reality and as a spiritual path, which is also walked in the modern Spiritual School of the Rosycross. And does such an approach not do much more justice to the Gnosis than a systematic explanation? For the Gnosis is a constantly active reality which can call and grasp a human being at any moment, and which can only be understood when it is experienced and lived.

I

What is «Gnosis»?

The human being can become conscious of the living reality of the Gnosis through the «spirit-spark» hidden in his heart.

In Greek, Gnosis means Knowledge, Knowing, and is a vitally necessary experience, a spiritual path by which the true human spiritual essence becomes conscious and active. Hence, Gnosis is primarily a very alive and relevant reality, and not a faith in a philosophical or religious system or knowledge in the sense of information.

Nor is Gnosis solely a religious movement of the past. The living reality of the Gnosis can be transmitted to a human being through the «spirit-spark» which lies hidden in his heart, yes, it *is* this «spirit-spark», this true human essence itself; it is the spiritual world, God, in which this spirit-spark is embedded.

Knowledge

If this spirit or light spark, of which the ancients spoke, is activated in the heart of a human being, such a person is first deeply touched. He is awakened by the «Power» of the Gnosis, of the Spirit. More powerfully than ever, he suddenly sees his life and the world in which he lives with other eyes. He gains self-knowledge.

On the one hand, he recognises the transient aspect of his existence and his being: his life controlled by I-centrality in a

world controlled by I-centrality. On the other hand, he discovers the imperishable aspect of his existence: he experiences himself as an imperishable being. He feels that he has originated from a spiritual world and that he is destined to live consciously in this spiritual world. He becomes aware that he can only grow toward this destination, if he gives up his I-centrality and lets his true self blossom forth. The perishable aspect of his existence must put itself at the service of the imperishable aspect. This inevitably results in a new mode of life. A process of inner change begins. In the «Gospel of Truth» we can read: «Hence, if one has knowledge, he is from above. If he is called, he hears, he replies, and he turns toward him who called him and he ascends to him and he knows why he is called. Since he has knowledge, he does the will of him who called him. He desires to please him and he finds rest. [...] He who is thus going to have knowledge knows whence he came and whither he is going. He knows it as a person who, having become intoxicated, has turned from his drunkenness, and having come to himself, has restored what is his own.»[1]

Gnosis as liberation

The Gnostic experiences the Gnosis as liberation: he is liberated from the delusion that this transient world is the true world. This is why the Gnosis is the doctrine of redemption, which grants the seeker liberating insight. Contrary to the idea of many authors, Gnosis is optimistically thinking and experiencing. For the Gnostic possesses the inner knowledge of the divine spark in his being, of the true self that stems from the original light field of the divine world and will return to it. The person who devotes himself to this return, will be taken up in the process of transfiguration, in the process of the healing of the living, immortal soul.

This is why the ancient Gnostics said: «Man is a fallen god»,

who does not belong in this world. His original fatherland is the other world, which does not belong to the visible universe. This is a fundamental truth, an ancient truth, which is as old as humanity itself: the truth of the two separate nature orders. The human being with his microcosmic light spark wanders through the world of good and evil and is constantly tormented by its opposites.

One of the most important experiences to which the path of the Gnosis leads, and which is beckoning as the shining goal at the end of the great quest, is peace, the return to true equilibrium in and with God. This is not peace in the sense of sitting on the couch after a tiring day. This peace means that we achieve harmony with the divine movement flowing from the Gnosis. Whoever places himself in this flow, can no longer be touched by evil. He is raised above himself into the Other One. Good and evil have been dissolved in the One that is God.

Gnosticism

Gnosis as a historical religious movement, as so-called «Gnosticism», is only one form in which the living, ever relevant, reality of the Gnosis is expressed. But Gnosticism *is* a very broad and common form in which the Gnosis is expressed.

The Gnosis has been passed on by various symbolical and philosophical systems. Since the 1945 discovery of fifty-three gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, there has been an ever-increasing public interest in the Gnosis. After the first complete publication of the Nag Hammadi texts in English in 1977[2], a large number of treatises about this subject has appeared. It is no coincidence that the Gnosis makes many hearts beat faster. It also shows that a totally different religious thinking exists than that which has been imposed by age-old church dominance and laid down in dogmas. In this

respect, the interest in the Gnosis coincides with the world-wide crisis, which is also a spiritual crisis in the inner being of individuals.

Gnosis is a radiation power

The historic Gnosis, too, shows that «Gnosis» is first of all a power that can be released as inner knowledge in a human being; a radiation that touches all creatures and stimulates them to realise the divine Plan. In our time, as in all times, the gnostic power is spread through enlightened people and concentrations of gnostic radiation in the form of power-fields. This radiation calls human beings and simultaneously grants them the strength to react to this call. Humanity experiences this radiation power as an invitation to break all ties with religion, science, the arts and society and to start looking for new opportunities in life. However, all who recognise this path and are prepared to walk it, need help. For there are simply too many opposing forces that want to maintain the old standards for the whole of humanity – as well as for everyone individually.

This is why the possibilities for liberation are concentrated in a gnostic powerfield, as is demonstrated by the activities of a Spiritual School. The Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross possesses such a powerfield, and it is standing as a beacon in the breakers of violence and collapsing dialectical values. Due to the interaction between the radiations of the Gnosis and the resulting development of the Spiritual School, a dynamic process is generated. All who truly want to, can attain the purpose of life – the spirit human being – in spite of all misunderstanding and resistance. The gnostic essence, which still lies hidden under a thick shell in so many manifested religions, will again be revealed and will testify to the unity of all liberated souls. From this unity, a new humanity will emerge. Despite all differ-

ences, all will then strive for the same inner enlightenment, all will respect each other, and all will enter into the eternal Light in unity and in inner freedom.

The relevance of the Gnosis

At the moment there is much confusion in the world. The chaos is increasing. Many are still striving to establish the divine Kingdom on earth and are acting according to a «wisdom» which proves to be no true wisdom. However, the time is near when many people will be prepared to acknowledge that their own wisdom does not suffice. Only the released inner wisdom, the Gnosis, can raise a human being up, beyond the limitations of time and space, of life and death, into the new, immortal life.

The Gnosis may be studied in a detached way, as one of many historic movements. It may also be considered in a detached way as one of many philosophical systems and we might try to understand its concepts and symbols. But then Gnosis will not be understood. It can only be understood, when it is experienced as an ever relevant, spiritual power, which is active in individuals, humanity and the cosmos, and which stimulates people and the cosmos to their destination. This destination is the reunification with the divine world, which the human being, as a microcosm, left in the dark past, when he surrendered to the wheel of birth and death. By overcoming the transient world through the power of the Gnosis, he will, with his true being, with the help of the Gnosis, be liberated from the wheel of birth and death and be able to enter the divine world, the Gnosis, again.

1 *The Gospel of Truth*, The Nag Hammadi Library, Gnostic Society Library. Translated by Robert M Grant.

2 The Nag Hammadi Library in English, Leiden, The Netherlands, 1977.

2

The path of the Gnosis

In the Gnosis, a Power lies hidden which doesn't have its origin in this world, but which rather stems from God's Love itself.

«I speak to you of the hidden, holy way called Gnosis,» the Saviour says in an ancient hymn. Two essential aspects are anchored in these words. The first aspect shows that Gnosis is not a passive principle, something that just falls into our laps. It is a path that has to be walked on the basis of an active process of inner development, involving, and changing, the entire human being. The second aspect refers to propagating, disclosing and exemplifying this path.

In the more familiar language of the Gospels, Jesus says: «I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.»[1] He also points out the necessity of following him: «If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.»[2]

I am the Way...

This hidden, holy path, called Gnosis, is an ancient and yet very relevant call, addressed to all who want to listen. It is a call that comes to humanity again and again, is understood by only a few, and is accomplished by still fewer. Whenever the

knowledge concerning this path has been in danger of getting lost, new messengers of the Gnosis came to open up the Path and the Light and to show humanity its high calling. The Indian Gnosis expresses this as follows:

Whenever loss of piety and the rise of impiety occurs, on those occasions do I create myself. For the protection of the righteous and for the destruction of the evildoers, for the sake of establishing Piety, I am born age after age. He who truly knows my divine birth and work to be such, casting off his body is not born again; he comes to me.[3]

This is described even more clearly and comprehensively in a text by Hippolytus:

The world's producing law was Primal Mind. And next was First-born's outpoured Chaos. And third, the soul received its law of toil. Encircl'd, therefore, with an aqueous form, with care o'erpowered it succumbs to death.

Now holding sway, it eyes the light, and now it weeps on misery flung. Now it mourns, now it thrills with joy; now it wails, now it hears its doom; now it hears its doom, now it dies. And now it leaves us, never to return. It, hapless straying, treads the maze of ills.

But Jesus said: «Father, behold, a strife of ills across the earth wanders from thy breath, but bitter chaos seeks to shun, and knows not how to pass it through.

On this account, o Father, send me; bearing seals, I shall descend; through ages whole I'll sweep, all mysteries I'll unravel; and forms of Gods I'll show; And secrets of the saintly path, styled Gnosis, Knowledge, I'll impart. [4]

The world of Light and the world of darkness

This brief cosmogony describes how the soul, separated from its original source, the Spirit, , is driven through the world of illusory matter, searching vainly for a way out. Fallen human-

ity is touched by the mercy of the Son of God, who asks to be allowed to descend and reveal the mysteries, and to teach humanity the holy path of the Gnosis. This is the path of true religio[5], the restoration of the link with God. He who descends into the nature of death for the salvation of humanity, to reunite humanity with its spiritual creator, can therefore rightly say: *«I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, but by me.»*

What does this way of the Gnosis really look like? The hymn quoted above states that the human being is separated from God. He is a mortal nature soul, broken off from the Spirit, broken off from the source of Life. Without a link with the divine Spirit, a human being remains tied to the wheel of birth and death. His true inner nature or Spirit-Soul is immortal, but cannot unfold and ascend to the realm of the Light. It remains therefore latent, encapsulated in the dark world of matter. It is imprisoned and yearns for freedom. This incomprehensible, inner hunger, this unfathomable yearning for freedom, love, harmony and eternity, drives human beings to engage in bizarre experiments. We call them experiments, because the necessary knowledge – Gnosis – of the cause and the purpose of life is lacking.

But the Gnosis is more than this. A power is hidden in the Gnosis, which does not stem from dialectical nature, but from the Love of God. This Light is radiated into the darkness, and is imparted to those who are open to it. This Light force enables human beings to walk the path of the Gnosis, to grow beyond themselves, and to become renewed creatures. After all, only by this unearthly power can the latent principle of the Spirit-Soul be awakened and unfold. The Gnosis accomplishes this miracle of the mysterium magnum. As Paul says, through a process of transmutation and transfigura-

tion, , *what is mortal will put on what is immortal and ultimately be swallowed up by life.* Through this power the immortal, spiritual Human Being can rise up. He will arise from the grave of matter and return to his divine fatherland. Nothing can bind him to the world of transient phenomena any longer. He has broken the seals, unveiled the mysteries, and traversed the spheres of the aeons of the microcosm and the macrocosm, without being harmed in any way.

The first condition for this is that a human being correctly understands his value, his own value in these great processes. He must descend to his innermost depth to discover that he is a nature human being and not a Divine Human Being. At best he is the image, in whom the Spirit Being can arise, when all the necessary conditions have been fulfilled.

Whoever wants to partake of the religio, should know that the two principles of Light and darkness are fundamentally separated and belong to different natures. If one cannot distinguish them, how could he ever turn these teachings into practice?[6]

This insight is the first door for those who truly want to partake of the Gnosis. The Spirit spark – until then more or less dormant – will be touched more intensely by the Light, so that the longing for salvation is awakened. This is the beginning of the Johannine phase, in which the paths for the inner Lord are made straight. *Not I, but the other one in me.* This is the second door.

Dying in Jesus is a process of I-demolition

Whoever yearns for the Gnosis, should not only desire this process and cooperate intelligently in it. It is his task to uncover all the coarse and subtle ties by which his whole system is imprisoned in death. Then he very intensely

experiences that he is a creature of the nature of death. Through his renewed insight and the aroused longing to become whole again (his longing for salvation), he becomes increasingly aware that his thinking, feeling and acting need a different basis. These strongly driven forces of human nature are subject to the law of self-maintenance. This is an important law in the nature of death, because every creature lives at the expense of another. Whoever is still applying this law, cannot walk the path of the Gnosis, for the Gnosis is diametrically opposed to self-love. The fundamental law of the Divine nature is:
Love God above all, and your neighbour as yourself.

The candidate on the path of the liberation of the imprisoned soul gains ever more understanding of the Truth, but also more awareness of his own structural impotence. This is why he should deny his own being. This means to neutralise the influence of the I. Thus a new basis is established for the not-I. The third door is opened, and what lies behind it is lived through. At this point the phase of perfect self-surrender to the Jesus man awakened within him, begins. It is what is called *dying in Jesus*. This is not mystical daydreaming, but a sober, well-founded and structural mode of life, in which everything that can obstruct the entrance to the path of renewal is rejected.

Due to this growing inner openness, the Gnosis can become increasingly more active. Dormant centres are touched and stimulated to new activity. At the same time, the old system is systematically cleansed of the influences of the old nature. The blood and the nerve fluid are charged with supernatural power, so that the process of transmutation can become stronger.

If any man would come after me, let him take up his cross and

follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

The struggle against the hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritŭal hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.[7]

The human being is a reflection of the cosmos. This is why he is called a microcosm. This microcosm, however, degenerated, after the central sun, the Spirit, withdrew from its system. Its nucleus now consists of a dark fire, the fundamental principle of dialectical nature. This fire is expressed by human selfishness. It is manifested in the personality and does not walk at the hand of God, but is guided by the *archons and their twelve aeons*. These unholy nature forces control and keep the world and humanity in their grasp.

The result is that the outer sphere of the microcosm – the auric firmăment – has degenerated. This sphere reflects the inner state of a human being, and is controlled by dialectical powers and their collaborators. Whoever wants to dissociate from them and wants to go the path of the Gnosis in order to leave the darkness and to enter into the world of eternal Light, has literally to become a new creature through transfiguration.

Transfiguration means the total replacement of the dark nucleus with the building of a new personality. Hence, transfiguration signifies the liberation and the resurrection of the

inner Divine Man. Through this process the deceptive, false lights in the auric firmament are extinguished. While on Patmos, John said:
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Before the new heaven and the new earth can appear, the old nature must have completely *died in Jesus*. This phase of the path shows the awakened soul human being who is, however, not yet *reborn through the Holy Spirit*. Before he can celebrate the resurrection, he must first *descend into hell*. First he has to liberate himself from the circle of the dialectical forces – the aeons with their snares, suggestions and temptations.

The Gospel of the Pistis Sophia
The candidate in this stage is, according to Apollonius of Tyana, *a pilgrim through the circle of the stars*. Consciously and voluntarily, he bids farewell to all astral suggestions that stem from the microcosm and the macrocosm. He will still stumble many times on this path. But in the power of the Gnosis, he will bring his imitation of Jesus to a good end. This struggle for liberation from the astral fire and the efforts to release the Divine Man are described in numerous gnostic writings. Many powers are available to help the candidate, as is shown in the thirteen songs of the Pistis Sophia.

Amen, amen, I say unto you: Before I came into the world, no soul has entered into the Light. And now, therefore, when I am come, I have opened the gates of the Light and opened the ways which lead to the Light. And now, therefore, let him who shall do what is worthy of the mysteries, receive the mysteries and enter into the Light. [8]

The way to the Light is open to all of us. No one is excluded

from salvation, unless he excludes himself by his mode of life. In the Gospel of the Pistis Sophia, the requirements and the stages of the path of liberation are explained in detail, although in veiled language. In this Gospel, it is emphasised that Jesus cannot be explained from this nature, but that he comes as a messenger from the Kingdom of the Light. This also clearly refers to the two nature orders, which are strictly separate in many gnostic texts.

Through a process of thirteen stages, the Pistis Sophia exerts itself to escape from the power of the twelve aeons and enter the liberating life of the Thirteenth Aeon. The thirteen songs of repentance explain this process.

The songs of repentance of the Pistis Sophia
The first song of repentance is the song of humanity. The Pistis Sophia acknowledges the true state of the world and humanity.

In the second song of repentance, the song of consciousness, self-knowledge is deepened. *Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going?*

The third song of repentance is the song of humility. Through the newly gained insight generated by the touch of the gnostic forces, humility, tolerance, meekness and trust in God develop.

This leads to the fourth song of repentance, the song of demolition. This means the fundamental and total giving up of all the struggle of opposites. It is the complete demolition of the old soul state.

The fifth song of repentance is described as the song of resignation. It happened that, when all the physical creatures of

Authades were pursuing her, she spoke the fifth song of repentance. On the basis of the processes already lived through, she proves her devotion with the words: *«O Light of my salvation, I sing praise to thee in the place of the height, and again in the Chaos.»*

Then follows the sixth song of repentance, the song of trust. In this stage, the Pistis Sophia continues her way of the cross until the total decline of the old nature. This journey back to the zero point of the I-nature is the way of the Cross with Roses, which will open up the entire system to the healing radiations of the awakening Spirit-Soul.

The seventh song of repentance is the song of decision or non-being. Here the nadir of the dialectical state is reached. *And if you gave everything, but not your life, then know that you have accomplished nothing.* In this phase, the twelve aeons will, for the last time, try to prevent the Pistis Sophia from passing over the border. The power with the lion's head appears, the power of imitation and delusion.

On this basis, the Pistis Sophia sings the eighth song of repentance, the song of the break-through. The morning has come! In this hour, her prayer is answered. The Light is imparted to her in a totally new way. For the first time, the Pistis Sophia consciously experiences the new Light power. However, the ultimate liberation has not yet been achieved. This new experience of the Gnosis also involves a new task, a new mission. In the remaining songs of repentance, this task has to be realised in order to safeguard absolute liberation.

The message of the Universal Teachings

When comparing the path of the Pistis Sophia to other gnostic writings, we can see the circle being closed. There is a time-

less, universal effort to liberate what lies imprisoned in night and death.

Although at first sight the songs of repentance of the Pistis Sophia may seem veiled and uninviting, this path is not one of sorrow and suffering. It is a very joyful path that will end when the human being reaches his ultimate destination.

Rejoice and exult and add joy to your joy, for the times are completed for me to put on my Vesture, which has been prepared for me from the beginning, which I left behind in the last mystery until the time of its completion. Now the time of its completion is the time when I shall be commanded by the First Mystery to discourse with you from the beginning of the Truth to the completion thereof, and from the interiors of the interiors [to the exteriors of the exteriors], for the world will be saved through you. Rejoice then and exult, for you are blessed before all men who are on the earth. It is you who will save the whole world.[9]

1 John 14:6.

2 Matthew 16:24, 25.

3 The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter IV, 7-9.

4 Hippolytus, Book V, chapter V.

5 The word *religio* can be translated in two ways. One translation is based on the verb *relegere* and means to perceive consciously. The other translation stems from *religere* and means *to restore the link*.

6 The Manichaean Gnosis: Fragment Pelliot.

7 Ephesians 6:10-12.

8 Pistis Sophia, A Gnostic Gospel, G.R.S. Mead, Trans. Spiritual Science Library, Blauvelt, New York, 1984, Chap. 135.

9 Ibid., Chap. 8.

3

Gnosis – the manifested mysteries

By Jesus' deed, the whole world has become a mystery school.

Up to the time of Jesus, there had been mystery schools like those in Eleusis and Delphi in Greece, where Orpheus and Apollo were worshipped as the keepers of the mysteries. In schools in Persia, the wisdom of Zarathustra was taught and the mystery schools of Egypt and Asia Minor were based on the teachings of Attis or Osiris. The Old Testament refers to them in the texts about the Nazarenes, a group of people devoted to God, to which also Samson and Gideon belonged.

It is also certain that the prophets knew these mystery schools, for they always pointed out that outer ceremonies should be considered as inner processes, in which the link between God and men was forged. At the time, it was known that humanity had to pass through the nadir of matter in order to be able to unite with God, a development guaranteed by the Brotherhood of the Liberated Ones, to any human being who wants to go this path.

During this process, whoever was being initiated received the knowledge contained in these mysteries. The hierophants of the mysteries, who maintained a conscious link with, and lived in, the powers and laws of God, acted as mediators in this process. And in this context it is only of minor importance which symbols were used to transmit this knowledge.

New developments of humanity

Until the coming of Jesus these mysteries were secret. Jesus, himself an initiate in the Jewish mysteries, makes it clear to those listening to him that earthly nature can decline in a conscious process, while the divine nature wakes up and grows. *Whoever loses his life for my sake* – for the sake of the Spirit of God – *will keep it*. His life was a testimony of the process that until then could only be accomplished within the walls of the mystery schools. In his thinking, feeling and desiring he gave up his I-centrality, so that the child of God within him could develop. This development took humanity to the point where the mysteries had to be revealed to ensure humanity's spiritual progress. Then it became possible for people to experience the process of inner dying and resurrection independently and in self-responsibility. This meant that, from this moment on, the awakening of the true self became a consciously experienced process. It no longer remained active as a memory, as it had previously, but it was placed in people's current lives. This act of Jesus became possible because the Universal Brotherhood had linked itself with humanity through and in him. He was the Christ, the Anointed, who had received and lived through the powers of the Spirit and who then put these powers at the disposal of all people who are able to go this path. In this way, the whole earth became a mystery school. The mysteries were in the open and no longer exclusively available to a small group of chosen ones. And, they had to be experienced consciously, which was not previously the case. This is why the existing mystery schools could be closed. Jesus had revealed the hidden knowledge. This knowledge, the Gnosis, appeared as a historically traceable movement in the region around the Mediterranean.

People have always wondered why the Gnosis suddenly became relevant, for it seemed that it had come into the world out of the blue, fully grown, without any preparation.

It carried traces of all cultures and traditions of its time. But where was its origin? In Persia, Israel, Greece or Egypt? The answer is not difficult if we consider that «Gnosis» is the manifested wisdom of bonafide mystery schools. Then it also becomes clear why it suddenly appeared simultaneously, everywhere in a perfect form. Due to the appearance of Jesus, secrecy was no longer necessary, nor allowed. Traces of the hidden wisdom of the past, which had so diligently been looked for, could not be found, because they had been hidden behind the walls of the mystery schools and their keepers had to observe a strict oath of secrecy. Because all countries and cultures had mystery schools, the Gnosis appeared simultaneously and in very different forms in, for example, the Jewish, the Greek and the Persian cultures.

A step closer to the ultimate goal

It is not important which form came first, because the wisdom in the holy places was nourished with a mighty, universal stream of «Gnosis». People have also wondered why saviours of the world other than Jesus are mentioned in so many gnostic movements, as Jesus is considered the Redeemer. In some Nag Hammadi writings, the saviours have Egyptian and Persian names, but there are also many in which Jesus is mentioned. This question can be answered as follows: The hierophants of the mysteries, which opened their gates in Jesus' days, knew that wisdom was manifested in Jesus and that the public celebration of the mysteries had taken place, while the Brotherhood of Life had approached humanity in the physical world so closely through Him, that a new step on the road to the ultimate goal could be undertaken. Some hierophants continued to use the original names of saviours from previous eras. Some of the Nag Hammadi texts speak of Seth, the son of Adam.

Others understood the significance of this new era and included Jesus in their teachings of wisdom. But is the name of the liberating power important for those who want to go the path of true man? After all, it always concerns the same, original human being! In this way, it also becomes clear why liberation is always described as part of a great cosmic process in gnostic writings. In the parts of the Bible about liberation, little is said about the creation of the world and the role of humanity in this process, nor about humanity before the fall and the possibility of return. These are restricted to liberation itself. This event is linked with traditional Jewish, Greek and Egyptian wisdom, in which the cosmic relationships in these processes are clearly shown. This is why all gnostic systems contain myths describing the origin of the spiritual world, the creation of the earthly world, the spiritual hierarchies and the hierarchies of angels and archons ruling this world.

Gnosis is firsthand knowledge of God

In his book «Gnosis and the spirit of late antiquity, Hans Jonas writes that the concept of «Gnosis» originated because of the specific psychological and spiritual qualities of Mediterranean man of that period. He writes that, at the time, people lived in a kind of vacuum in which all spiritual and traditional values ceased to exist, and no longer had any value due to the new challenges of the time. Certainties had disappeared. Social structures and general standards no longer offered support. People were confronted with a confusing chaos. In order to fill this vacuum, a series of supernatural certainties and processes was devised, within which people could withdraw in order to, at least, be able to live. For these people, the world was no longer a testing place or a cosmos, a place of order and beauty in which he had previously been taken up. From this point of view, there are certain conditions that a human being has to meet to be able to

surrender to spiritual experiences. But there is no explanation for the fact that the Gnostics had such experiences. In the explanation by Jonas, gnostic systems are nothing but reactions to conditions in people's environment and in nature and they have no objective value.

In spite of this, Gnostics describe experiences which were also undergone in mystery schools long before. They can be undergone when the slumbering spirit principle in a human being wakes up and shows him the transience and the lack of divinity of the world. Whether this world looks beautiful or chaotic is irrelevant. It is likely that such spiritual experiences only begin to speak, when all the old systems have been broken down and human beings are living in great disharmony.

Gnosis: not the product of traditional wisdom

Historical, psychological or cultural labels cannot deal with Gnostic experiences. Nor does it suffice to consider the Gnosis to be a product of traditional wisdom. Gnosis, the Gnosis, is always a firsthand experiencing of the divine Light. If we want to relate the historical development to the wisdom of the mysteries, we can only say that ancient symbols were taken over in order to describe the manifested processes. Suitable garments in which the wisdom was able to be clothed, were made available in these holy places. This wisdom, charged with liberating power, stimulated the Gnostic to walk the path shown in his own system and to seek the liberation of his soul.

If we want to occupy ourselves with the meaning of the concept of «Gnosis», we have to ask where the original wisdom of the mystery schools came from. Biologists like to explain the origin of life as coming from another planet. But in this way the origin of life is not explained, but shifted. This also applies

to the explanations concerning the origin of the Gnosis. Gnostic experiences are individual experiences of the first-hand link with God. These experiences have no relation to time, to historical developments or to cultural patterns. They are not arbitrary speculations or discoveries. They speak about the true human essence, about the reality of the world from which the inner human being stems. And, characteristic of the Gnosis, they speak of living the path that leads back to the original world.

The same process lived through in the soul

This is universal truth. It has been manifested to teachers and pupils. It has been manifested to Jesus the Christ and was taught by Him in public. His experiences are confirmed by the Gnostics. Many of them were his pupils, while others were followers from later periods. But they could all testify to the same thing, because they had experienced the same process in their own souls.

And thus we can state that Gnosis is certainly manifested at certain psychological moments in the development of humanity. When humanity has sufficiently matured to receive this firsthand knowledge, its teachers will appear, just as in our time many seekers can find the bridge to the Gnosis in their own system.

4

Gnostic myths

Gnostic myths address the more or less dormant Light principle in a seeker and they can kindle it for the Gnosis.

The incentive to seek never leaves the human being, thirsting for knowledge, for a single moment. In one Christian-gnostic manuscript it is expressed as follows: *«Who were we? What have we become? Where were we? Into what place have we been cast? Whither do we hasten? From what are we delivered?»* [1]

Every time period has its myths, stories about gods, national heroes, geniuses or modern idols. But a gnostic myth has very special features. A gnostic myth is not concerned with an event at a certain time or place, which the world and humanity explain in contemporary terms. The questions that a gnostic myth answers are aimed at knowledge of the absolute truth. They stem from the innermost depths of the human soul and express its seeking; a quest that is independent of space and time.

Gnostic myths concern the fate of the soul, which has fallen from an eternal, divine origin and is now caught in this world. Through knowledge of its origin, it seeks the way out, the way of liberation. There have always been gnostic myths, adjusted to time and language, but with an unchanging, eternal foundation as their point of departure. The gnostic human

being knows and serves true *knowledge*, which is called *gnosis* in Greek. What does this knowledge refer to?

A path of inner manifestation

Gnostic knowledge is not theory, but is based on inner experiencing of God, on firsthand knowledge. This manifestation occurs when the processes of soul generation have reached their peak and the soul's only struggle is to obtain absolute knowledge. Knowledge received in this way is always the point of departure and also the aim of the quest. Gnosis is received when the soul experiences the despair of its earthly existence, its deep ignorance and the oppression of its prison. This frees the soul from its illusions and the delusion of earthly life. Then the Light can be manifested in the soul. It illuminates the inner state of the soul and reveals that which the soul is seeking. The Light descends into the inner state of the soul and lifts it up to a higher level of life.

The Apocryphon of John describes this fact in an imaginative and impressive way. John is the seeker. He wants to know the Father. He is a pupil of the mysteries. He is the personality who is on his way to the Temple in the service of the Light principle in his heart. There a Pharisee greets him with the words: «*Where is your master whom you followed?*» And he adds that John is the victim of a deception that has led him astray from the traditional path. When John heard these words, he «*turned away from the Temple to the mountain, to a desert place.*» [2]

John is confronted with the emptiness and lack of love of the outside world. This encounter reveals his inner soul state. With his own images of the truth he is standing before a border. Self-doubt seizes him. He sees his lack of pure knowledge and experiences deep darkness. In the «Apocryphon» this

darkness is the «desert place». In this darkness, his ideas of the truth dissolve into absolute nothingness.

What does he really know about the Saviour? Nothing appears tangible to him anymore. And sadly he asks himself: «How then was the Saviour appointed, and why was he sent into the world by his Father, and who is his Father who sent Him, and of what sort is that aeon to which we shall go? For what did he mean when he said to us: This aeon to which you will go is of the type of the imperishable Aeon, but he did not teach us concerning the latter, of what sort it is.» [2]

The desert place to which John proceeds, symbolises the experience of the complete *not-being* of the earthly personality. And John himself is the symbol of the personality that is stripped of all earthly delusion. In this way, his soul has become free and it turns to the Mountain. It turns to the Spirit, represented by the *Mountain*. At this moment, the Saviour is manifested in John's soul. The Light of the Spirit guides him from the valley of doubt across the frontier of the truth. The Saviour shows himself as the spiritual image of the perfect human being. It is a threefold figure: a youth, an old man and a servant. John recognises these figures and sees how they constantly change. How the youth becomes an old man, then a servant and then a youth again... He learns to know the unity of the three figures: «There was not a plurality before me, but there was a likeness with multiple forms in the light, and the forms appeared through each other, and the likeness had three forms.» [2]

John receives the knowledge directly from and in unity with the Light. This unity encompasses the knower (John), the content of the knowledge (the essence of God) and the means to gain this knowledge (the Light). The Light, which is vivified within him

in the figure of the Saviour, explains the truth to him.

Christian-gnostic myths

The youth is the Son who renews his soul, the redeeming Christ. The old man is the principle of the life and wisdom of the Father. And the servant is the serving and comforting Love of the Holy Spirit. The inner Light principle gradually opens up the truth that has been received. Now John knows the divine world, the fall of the Spirit-Soul and the origin of the earthly cosmos, but also the fate of the human soul and the path of liberation offered to it. Gnostic myths are a medium through which experiences like those of John are passed on to other seekers. This concerns the processes of soul and spirit, which remain closed to the rational intellect. Symbolic figures are able to make these processes comprehensible.

Like all mythical stories, gnostic myths also tie in with the fantasy of the reader or listener. They are characterised by the expression of insight into various areas, insight which is revealed by the Spirit of God. They address the more or less active Light principle in the human being and are able to open it to the Gnosis. It is the Saviour himself, who then becomes active in a human being and who neutralises the lack of knowledge by restoring the original link.

As a medium, gnostic myths fulfil the purpose of the Gnosis. For such stories always concern the fallen soul that lacks the true wisdom to neutralise his fallen state. In the writings found at Nag Hammadi, this aspect has been very clearly explained.

Since the storytellers were not bound by church or doctrine, their stories were products of their own free thinking. They collected their material from various religious and cultural

schools of thought (Greek, Jewish, Iranian, Christian), and thus built a framework that was attuned, as much as possible, to the images of their time. The core of such myths was the one, universal and divine truth that had to be liberated from all traditions and doctrines. In fact, we could speak of one great gnostic myth with ever-new forms and versions that were developed in order to be able to address the Light spark in the human being.

In this way, a number of gnostic creation stories underlies the texts in the Old Testament, in which they are explained in a new and revolutionary way.

The invisible God

The earthly world, these creation stories relate, is not the work of the supreme God, but rather of a fallen being of a lower order. The Gnostics call this being *the creator of the world* (Greek: demiurge) and they are referring to the creative god of the Jews (1 Moses 2:4-17). But they state that this god is not the same as the unborn God who creates the Spirit and the spiritual beings (1 Moses 1:2,3). The demiurge himself was created as the result of an error. He has called the whole earthly creation, and its creatures, to life as the result of this error, and they are living in a world of ignorance and darkness.

In their fallen state of life, human beings do not know the true, original God. The Gnostics describe this God by means of all kinds of properties indicating what this God is not. Earthly standards and descriptions cannot be applied to Him.

Gnostics speak about the unimaginable, ineffable, incomprehensible, imperishable, unborn, timeless and invisible God of Light and Love. In the Apocryphon of John we read:

«He is not a magnitude that can be measured. He is no creature. No one can understand Him. He is absolutely nothing that exists, but also something that is more excellent than anything else.» [3]

According to Irenaeus, the Gnostics say that, *«at invisible and inhuman heights, there is an ever-being, perfect Aeon (this is a supernatural being) which is called the* primordial beginning, *the* primordial father *and the* primordial ground *(bythos). This Aeon cannot be comprehended and is invisible, eternal and unborn, and has always been in great stillness and silence in endless time-spaces (aeons).»* [4]

The «Tripartite Tractate» states that the human language is inadequate to describe this primordial beginning. *Not one of the names which are conceived or spoken, seen or grasped – not one of them applies to him, even though they are exceedingly glorious, magnifying and honoured.* [5] And the Gospel of Philip explains that the names and descriptions given to worldly and heavenly things in the usual way, are deviations and are called fundamentally differently. The error is that we think in terms of earthly limitations, and so we judge the unearthly and unlimited by the same standard. *Names given to the worldly are very deceptive, for they divert our thoughts from what is correct to what is incorrect. Thus one who hears the word «God» does not perceive what is correct, but perceives what is incorrect.* All names given to the divine world, it continues, can give rise to misunderstanding. *So also with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and Life and Light and Resurrection and the Church and all the rest. People do not perceive what is correct but they perceive what is incorrect, unless they have come to know what is correct.* [6]

It is clear that the gnostic concept of God is diametrically

opposed to all the prevailing concepts of a world god and the gods of nature. The question of how they arrived at this conclusion can be answered by referring to the manifesting aspect of gnostic writings. By inner revelation, the Gnostic learns to distinguish between divine and human truth. He realises that the divine truth is Love, Wisdom and Life. Because this truth leads the human being into the mystery of the incomprehensible, it also liberates him from error and ignorance. In this way it unmasks the whole earthly world order.

When a Gnostic has experienced the Light, which is God the Redeemer, he will also recognise the god of the dark creation. He realises that he himself has wandered in this world and that he was brought to his knees on his way of experience, until he reached the frontier of illusion and delusion, and the divine Light spark woke up in his heart. Then he speaks, as we can read in the «Gospel of Truth»:
It is thus that they who cast ignorance from them as sheep do not consider it to be anything, nor regard its properties to be something real, but they renounce them like a dream in the night and they consider the knowledge of the Father to be the dawn.[7]

The dual nature of the earthly human being
Knowledge of God is not a theory, but a power that opens up the path to the origin. On this path the Gnostic looks upon himself as a dual being. He lives between two fields of existence and senses the roots of both within himself. On the one hand he is a child of the earthly creator, on the other he carries the germ of the heavenly human being within him. This experience forms the basis of the gnostic worldview of the two nature orders: an imperishable and a perishable nature.

Knowledge of God grants the Gnostic the possibility to go the path of soul liberation. Due to this, he knows that he carries the seed of the Father. In the «Apocryphon», John says: *For we do not understand what is immeasurable, except for him who came forth from Him, namely from the Father. For it is He who told it to us alone.* [8]
But he also knows, that his Spirit-spark is imprisoned in earthly man.

The question of how the divine soul could sink into matter, and why it remains imprisoned here until the Light sets it free, is answered by the Gnostics with their cosmology and anthropology. This part of the gnostic myths provides insight into the genesis of the cosmos and humanity.

After the Redeemer has revealed the divine being to John, he says: *I have come to reveal you what is and what was and what is to come; the invisible and the visible and to teach you about perfect Man.* [9]

The world of the divine totality
The Gnostics distinguish three realms in the world of the divine All, the divine nature order. The first one is the kingdom of the unborn Father, the original Spirit. The primordial source of the Spirit creates the Light, the Son, from the primordial substance, which He himself also is. Primordial source and primordial substance are the Father-Mother; the Light is the Christ.

In the second realm, Christ works together with the higher Sophia – the Wisdom – and creates original Man. The first spiritual Man works in the third realm and he creates seven primordial divine powers and twelve primordial divine principles. These are the Aeons that build the forms of the spiritual

world. The last Aeon is the lower Sophia. It is from these primordial powers and primordial principles that Humanity originates, the community of the higher Ecclesia. These three realms form the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The fall of the Sophia and her «work of fear»

In the above-mentioned world of peace and unity, the lower Sophia enters into a dramatic development. She is called a fairly young Aeon which begins her work in a state of instability and leaves the will of the Spirit out of the picture. Overzealous, she prematurely creates on the basis of the feelings of her recently gained freedom and independence. She is not yet bound by the law of the Spirit. In this state she begins to have self-doubt. *For, she was not able to bear the sight of the Light, but she looked into the depth and she doubted. Out of this there was a division – she became deeply troubled – and a turning away because of her self-doubt and division, forgetfulness and ignorance of herself and of that which is.* [10]

She creates a fearful being out of herself: *a ruler appeared, lion-like in appearance, androgynous, having a great authority within him, and ignorant whence he had come into being.* [11] This ruler is the demiurge. He is also called Yaldabaoth or Authades and is nothing but the principle of uncontrolled independence and I-centrality. Yaldabaoth says immediately after he has been created: *It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists apart from me.* [12] This work of fear by the lower Sophia now vivifies a creation of its own: a reflection of the world of the divine fullness. This image is threefold. The earth cosmos with its seven Archons and twelve Aeons came into being in this way. And finally the earthly human being was created.

But the Father draws a curtain or veil between the imperishable world of the Spirit and the creation of Yaldabaoth. The inner world and the outer world are separated, so that the outer world cannot perceive and penetrate the inner world. The Father does this, we can read in the «Tripartite Tractate», *so that the things which have come to be (the transience) might become an order which be bitter.* And the text continues, *The Father wanted, by the separation of the two worlds, to create the possibility of distinguishing between the two and thus gain insight of that which is divine and that which is not.* [13]

Subsequently, Yaldabaoth and his powers created humanity. This is the third realm of imitation. However, because these creators themselves are blind and without spirit and can only see the outer image of the Sophia, they create man after this image. This human being has therefore no spiritual soul, but an animal soul, which is not viable.

The implantation of the grains of seed of the Light

When the Sophia sees the results of her self-willed actions, she is deeply shocked. She shows remorse and turns upward and begs Christ for help. She is strengthened by his power and together with Christ she begins the work of salvation. The blind creation of Yaldabaoth has to be taken back to its origin. Out of compassion, the Sophia plants a grain of seed of the Light in the animal human soul. In the human being a spark of the Spirit is implanted, so that he will live in the true sense of the word. This spark is the divine breath (pneuma), the pledge for salvation. When insight kindles this spark, the original, inner human being can be created on this basis. At the end of time, Yaldabaoth himself will finally be struck by the Light and be thrown into the deep abyss (tartaros), from which he will never rise up again.

The situation of the present-day human being

Doesn't this cosmic myth tell us exactly how things are at present, regarding the human microcosm? The original microcosm lived united with the divine Spirit. The Sophia, the heavenly personality, lived in it. This threefold system was in harmony with the divine world. Then the Spirit-Soul started to build on the basis of its own will and this caused a disturbance. Instead of divine wisdom, the principle of I-centrality became active. This is the blind auric self, the power with the lion's head, Authades or Yaldabaoth, the creator of its own firmament.[14] This power created nothing but imitations which lacked the Spirit. It totally adapted itself to the laws of matter. It created the earthly, mortal personality. Under these altered conditions, the original light being could no longer live in the microcosm. It was replaced by an image-bearer, created from the substances of the natural elements, as an image of the original light being. This image-bearer was connected to the microcosm and the Light spark.

The myths relate that a Light spark was implanted in earthly man by the divine Love. This spark grows like a seed that must ultimately break open. Thus Yaldabaoth and his false creation can be undone and can be taken up into the creation of the Spirit again. When I-centrality no longer says: *It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists apart from me,* the Spirit-Soul can begin to live again and unite with the Redeemer.

John shows man his destiny, because the path to the origin takes shape within himself again. In the nadir of his doubt, his faith forms the bridge to the Spirit. His faith originates from the powers in his heart, which yearn for the Spirit. The radiation power of the Gnosis touches the opened heart and links it with the head. The ideation power of the head projects

what has been received into the image of the Mountain, to which John goes to receive knowledge.

His personality is the serving image-bearer, in whom the Redeemer is manifested in order to remove the lack of true, living knowledge and wisdom, and to erect the original being in the microcosm again.

1	Clemens of Alexandria, Ex Theodoto 78, 2.
2, 8	The Apocryphon of John. Transl. Frederik Wisse.
3	Papyros Berolinensis.
4	Irenaeus, Adversus hearesus.
5, 10, 13	Three partite Tractate. Transl. Harold W. Attridge and Dieter Müller.
6	The Gospel of Philip. Transl. Wesley W. Isenburg.
7, 9	The Gospel of Truth. Transl. Robert M. Grant.
11, 12	On the Origin of the World. Transl. Hans-Gebhardt Bethge and Bentley Layton.
14	Pistis Sophia.

5

Duality, docetism, world escape, ascesis...

The external human being with all his creations is perishable, the spiritual human being is imperishable.

All prejudices concerning the Gnosis stem from the one fundamental misunderstanding that the natural, earthly human being could be the human being the Gnosis speaks about. The Gnostics do not speak, however, of the experiences of the external human being in the outside world, but of the inner experiences of the inner, spiritual human being in the spiritual world.

Gnostic «processes» are not mental inventions, they concern the experiences of the spiritual human being who is very often still powerless and seemingly asleep. If this spiritual human being wakes up, however, he becomes aware of himself. He consciously experiences that he is a spirit from the Spirit, a thought from the thinking of the Father. And he becomes aware of his own structure and powers, which are similar to the structure and powers of the Spirit that pervade the world. He becomes conscious of this truth.

He now recognises that there are two worlds: an outside one and an inner one. The external human being of nature lives in the outside world, with his knowledge, his religion and his actions. The inner, spiritual human being lives in the inner world, the world of the Spirit. The external human being

with all his creations is mortal and perishable; the spiritual human being is imperishable.

The dualism of the Gnostics

When a Gnostic speaks of good, he or she refers to the world of the imperishable Spirit. To him, the transient, earthly world is a prison as long as it keeps the imperishable Spirit in a human being from developing. The earthly world would like to impose its desires and its self-maintenance on the spiritual human being. To a certain extent it appears evil and dark to the Gnostic, because it darkens the enlightenment of the spiritual consciousness. It appears evil to him, both in its good and bad aspects. Both the relatively good and the relatively evil in the transient world are chains that keep the human spirit away from life in the imperishable, absolute world of the Spirit. This is why, to the Gnostic, the transient world is dualistic. In this world, good is opposed to evil. However, the absolute good of the Spirit is not the opposite of the good of the dualistic world. There can be no dualism between the absolute and the relative. Dualism exists only between equivalent poles, in the context of the relative world. To the Gnostic, there are not two absolute principles of good and evil, which have been each other's enemies since primordial times. The spiritual world is the absolute good. It is the unity of the tree of life. Absolute evil does not exist. When a human being opposes this unity, he creates the duality of the tree of the knowledge of the relative good and the relative evil. Besides, this external world is not absolute. It lives, after all, on the basis of the spiritual world and it is supported by it, although it revolts against it. If a human being becomes aware of this polarity of the external world and its origin, he can withdraw from it and turn to the all-good again. In this way, the external world also returns to its destiny: to be an expression of the inner spiritual world. In the Gospel of Phi-

lip we can read: *Light and darkness, life and death, right and left, are brothers of one another. [...] But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble, eternal.*

The «docetism» of the Gnostics

From what preceded, we may draw the conclusion that the Gnosis does not save and liberate the human being of this nature, but the spiritual being. After all, the latter is lying captive in the chains of the world of mortal nature. As long as the relative good attracts human beings, and they fight relative evil, they constantly eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then this tree usurps the place of the tree of life, and prevents it from growing. However, when the human inclination to turn the relative into the absolute does not succeed, the spiritual, the absolute, comes to the fore in him. When he dissociates from the power of attraction of the relative good and from the struggle against relative evil, the absolute good in him will begin to grow.

The spiritual human being experiences the natural body as a prison and an obstacle. He liberates himself from the influences of this body, which is not a suitable instrument for him. However, when the spiritual human being awakens and is vivified, he will build a new body as a new instrument for his actions. These processes are clearly described in the New Testament. Jesus consciously destroys the old temple of his earthly body and builds a new temple, a body in which the Spirit can dwell. This is why the Gnostics said that the body of Jesus did not die on the cross. By this they meant that Jesus' earthly body was not the true body that corresponded to his inner being. Jesus' true body is the body of the resurrection. This body simply cannot die. In this sense, the Gnostics have been misunderstood. Their words were interpreted as: «The body Jesus used during his earthly life was not an earthly

body of flesh and blood.» This is called docetism or appearances.

Just as every earthly human being possesses a body, Jesus also possessed an earthly body of flesh and blood, and he sacrificed it, just like everyone on the path of liberation sacrifices his life for others. However, this earthly body of flesh and blood was certainly not Jesus' true body. Jesus took «the form of a servant», as Paul expressed it.

Although he was a living spiritual human being, he was born in the perishable world, and took an earthly body, «the form of a servant», so that the immortal spiritual human being could work in transient nature. In this way, he exemplified the process of liberation to the earthly human being.

Fundamentally, the earthly body is for every human being – and not only for Jesus – not the true body, but only an «sham body, because the spiritual human being is the true human being. For the spiritual human being, the earthly body is not his true abode. But as long as the true human being has not yet been awakened, and he lives on the basis of his earthly consciousness, his natural body corresponds to this.

The escape from the world of the Gnostics

The Gnostics have always been blamed for being only interested in their own liberation and for wanting to escape the world. Did Jesus not say: «*Whoever does not hate the world, can not be my disciple*»? When the natural human being loves his own world and dedicates himself to his neighbours, neither the earthly world nor his neighbours will be redeemed. The human being who wants to be a disciple of Jesus and wants to follow him – this means, whoever wants to follow the truth – will understand that he must first break

all his ties with the natural world, and all his ideals of neighbourly love, before the truth can be manifested to him. He must also let go of the illusion that earthly, neighbourly love could liberate the world and humanity. However, this does not mean that he should not spontaneously fulfil his earthly duties as much as possible. He will «hate» the world to the extent that it forms, both within, and outside him, an obstacle to the truth.

But once these ties have been broken, and the truth has become active in him as love, then a totally new relationship with nature will have been accomplished. He then possesses the only basis on which neighbourly love can work in a liberating way. In this way, the Gnostic liberates himself from the control of his own and others' earthly interests. He «hates» the world.

For someone who does everything to improve the world on the earthly plane, this may indeed look like an escape from the world. As a responsible instrument of the new love that is gradually being formed in him, the Gnostic now loves the world in a new way. And he cannot do otherwise but work for this fallen world. The God within him loves the world, not in order to serve the interests of the world, but to lead the divine in this world back to God.

Thus the Gnostic becomes living proof of the following words from the Gospel of John: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Gnostic self-liberation through knowledge

The Gnostics were also accused of purportedly believing that a certain secret knowledge would determine their deliver-

ance. They were supposed to have had the idea that a human being could be liberated through knowledge. Their adversaries countered this with the idea of faith.

They said that through faith a human being distances himself from his own knowledge and totally surrenders to the Saviour. And that human beings are proud due to their acquired knowledge and pretend to be liberators themselves.

But for the Gnostics, it is not a matter of knowledge acquired by the mind, and even less of the liberation of the natural human being. What matters to them is to become conscious of the divine element within the human being, which can be achieved when the earthly human being not only believes, but is also silent, and totally surrenders himself to this divine element.

There have been, and still are, countless individuals who do not recognise this and hence do not use it properly. A Gnostic cannot be arrogant and make exclusive claims, because his I has learned to be silent, and has decreased in the power of the Spirit. He shares his insights with everyone, without exception. And he would like nothing better than for everyone to be able to achieve the liberation of the divine within themselves, through understanding. A person's degree of susceptibility is, however, the decisive factor. Whoever does not want or cannot open himself up to the inner Light, will be unable to experience the Spirit of God.

What does all of this have to do with the self-liberation of the Gnostics?

Recognising the Light means to become conscious of the divine. The divine in the human being is liberated by becoming conscious. Human captivity means that the divine within

a person is not aware of itself, and therefore cannot become active. Becoming conscious of the divine occurs within the human being. By a certain mode of life, the human being of nature can promote an undisturbed unfolding of this process. He can believe and be silent, but the natural human being himself can never force the process of becoming conscious. Recognition in a human being is only possible through the power of the inner Christ.

The gnostic way of nullification of that which belongs to nature, and the resurrection of that which is spiritual, is only possible if a Saviour, in whom the Spirit lives, exemplifies this way, and thus opens up the path, the morphogenetic gnostic field, so that others can follow. Thus the possibility is created, and the human being himself must grasp it and realise it. It is not enough to trust that someone else has realised the liberation for him. That would not be humility and self-surrender, but only illusion and delay.

Asceticism and the worldly delight of the Gnostics

Is it true that Gnostics suppress their natural being and no longer live their lives? Such sham-Gnostics will certainly have existed. But what may appear to be asceticism to the ordinary person of this nature, may be an unforced spiritual mode of life by which the Gnostic is bidding farewell to earthly life.

When the spiritual aspect of a human being is awakened, he experiences joy and sorrow as relative and unsatisfactory emotions. He no longer plays along, he no longer maintains the disorder of the earthly world and no longer lets himself be occupied with it, because he has experienced the true order of the Spirit. He does not need to suppress nature, but he bids farewell to nature because a higher goal calls him.

Is it true that Gnostics give a free hand to their natural being? There have certainly also been these types of sham-Gnostics. But when Gnostics like Kerinth, who has been particularly blamed for this, said that life should be fully lived if someone is to attain liberation, they meant that a Gnostic should become acquainted with all human aspects in order to be able to understand the insignificance of earthly life. He need not have experienced or done everything himself. It suffices that he becomes aware of the presence of all human aspects within himself. If his current life is not enough, the experiences of many lives are added.

Because if a human being understands the insignificance of everything earthly and dissociates from it, he will certainly still experience joy and sorrow, but he will no longer be bound to them. Thus he will fully experience the essence of joy and sorrow, and better be able to recognise it than those who fight this sorrow and want to hold on to joy, and consequently are no longer able to observe objectively.

Hence there are, corresponding to the stage of development of a Gnostic, various possibilities: ascetically standing in the Spirit, and experiencing the earthly from within the Spirit. With these two, mutually exclusive certainties, the Gnostics have earned as much criticism as John the Baptist and Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke (ch.7:33-35), we read: *For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say: He has a demon. The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say: Behold a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.*

A peculiar variation of the reproach that the Gnostics would make their worldly pleasures a priority is that of sexual

license. Whoever tries to adapt the gnostic path to the desires of his earthly nature, has perhaps suffered because of it. But such reproaches are misplaced in the case of a true Gnostic. This can only be a misunderstanding due to a wrong and too literal interpretation of concepts like *bridal room, bride and bridegroom, spiritual and natural seed and blood*. In gnostic texts, these are the often-used symbols of processes on the inner path. These concepts illustrate the experiences of the soul. Whoever is not familiar with these experiences, will easily explain them wrongly, and probably attribute his own fantasies to the Gnostics.

In numerous gnostic texts we can read: *Jesus kissed Mary Magdalene on the mouth*. Current stories and movies are quite eager to conclude that Jesus and Mary had a relationship. But when Jesus kisses Mary on the mouth, this means that he makes the soul – the female element – partake of the Spirit – the male principle. This example shows that the processes of the inner path were represented symbolically, and had quite a different meaning than the materialistically inclined human being would think.

Symbol and reality

Passages from more ancient texts of a purely gnostic character have been inserted into the texts about John (about 300 years AD). In one of them, it is said that *Jesus turns everything into symbols*. When Jesus, the spiritual human being, is awakened in a human being, the latter recognises that the natural world has no absolute value. To him, it is only an expression of spiritual symbols. Whoever experiences the earthly world as absolute and utterly accepts its laws, will also try to make this transient state permanent. This will result in chaos and struggle. Such a human being cuts himself off from the spiritual world and causes this nature to degenerate to the point

that it can no longer be a symbol of the spiritual nature.

But if a human being admits the spiritual world into himself and recognises it as absolute, then all matters of nature will be put in their rightful place. They are reordered and restored so as to be an expression of the spiritual world. This human being recognises that earthly nature is dualistic, and in this sense cannot be the symbol of the unity of the tree of life, in which positive and negative cooperate harmoniously and are not each other's opposites. He will understand that the current, natural body is no longer the temple of the Holy Spirit.

If a human being systematically lifts himself up in the powers of the Spirit, the old body will be replaced by a new one, capable of serving, once again, as an expression and a symbol of the Spirit. He will not consider the path of life of a saviour like Jesus as a unique historic event, but as a testimony to the path of liberation. On this path, he himself is liberated and he can show and exemplify that liberation to others. In addition, he will be able to read the holy language as it is intended to be: as a symbol of the development of the Spirit-Soul and the resulting transfiguration of the entire system. To him, it is no longer a description of events in external life, but a symbolic account of inner liberation.

6

The development of the Gnosis through history

A gnostically inclined human being is a human being who directly experiences God. He perceives the truth from within.

How can a human being be liberated from his imperfect world? Why is this world imperfect? Why is it good or bad? If God is love, then why is there a creation that does not show love?

Thinkers and philosophers are still occupied with these questions. These questions form an open door to the teachings of the Gnosis. The Gnosis states that the human fall is the cause of suffering in an imperfect world. It is a world of darkness, neither good nor bad, but separated from God. Christ says: *No one is good, not even one*. This does not refer to the moral state of humanity, but to the fact that a birth in darkness excludes the Light. In this context, being good means: *being born in the world of the Light*. Everything that stems from darkness is a part of the darkness, no matter how hard we try to improve it.

There have always been people who have been occupied with these fundamental questions; who could not find peace in this fallen world. Driven from within, they have sought for higher knowledge, for the *true knowledge* which is called the *Gnosis*. In this sense, Gnostics are seekers of *true knowledge* or *Gnosis*. Great spiritual movements have originated from it, which are essentially based on a gnostic core. Throughout

time, these pure cores have usually been removed or clogged up due to wrongly directed seeking, or deliberate falsification.

Original Christianity also started on a gnostic basis. When Jesus propagated *the kingdom not of this world*, he drew from a sublime knowledge stemming from the *unity with the Spirit, the unity with the Father*. In the Jewish tradition of that time, his teachings represented an impulse that questioned the existing order. The Gnosis is always heretical with regard to existing religious ideas, because the inner experience of divine wisdom has to clash with crystallised religious traditions. This is evident from the life story of Jesus and his struggle with the orthodox system.

He is known by name

The early Christians were true Gnostics, not in the sense of historical Gnosticism, which was already in existence, but rather Gnostics in the true sense of the word. This means that they had firsthand knowledge of the divine plan. Through the Christ radiation, they were linked with the power of the Gnosis, with God himself. They experienced this power inwardly and did not need an organisation as a mediator. Their faith was based on a profound personal experience, an inner knowledge without dogma or externally controlled faith that lacked true experience. Paul describes this state of life as follows: *He who through faith is righteous shall live.* (Gal.3:11) Here Paul refers to true inner faith.

The law, dogma, is not based on faith. Dogmas are dialectical and do not give access to true life. On the contrary, they maintain this sham-world. Whoever believes only according to the letter of the law, is linked with the laws of the world and allows himself to be guided by them.

What does a gnostic touch mean? What does this look like? And what are the consequences of such a touch?

A gnostic experience stems from a touch of the Holy Spirit. Whoever is touched by the Spirit can only act on the basis of, and manifest, the Spirit. The Spirit irradiates him with infinite power. The Bible states that *he is known by name*.

Gnosis and Spirit are one and the same. True Gnosis leads to unity, to the Spirit, to eternal life. Whoever receives Gnosis, hears the voice of the Spirit speak in his own heart. He propagates the message quietly and with certainty. Gnosis and Spirit are one inseparable unity.

In the early stages of Christianity, this unity was still clearly present. But gradually it became lost to the extent that the Light impulse of Christ also became weaker. Once the unity had been affected, schisms developed. Uncertainty and conflict among the faithful occurred more frequently. This uncertainty caused regulation by external organisations in order to control the experience of the divine. The experience of the individual follower of Christ was externalised, delegated as it were. This delegation to others who were supposed to have had gnostic experiences, also brought about an unholy division between orthodox and more liberal believers. This externalisation meant that many no longer experienced the Spirit within themselves. Yet, there have always been people who preserved a direct link with the Spirit, who lived out of it and testified to it.

Gnostics in the first centuries AD

During the first century AD, no official church yet existed. There were the ancient Jewish teachings and the new teachings disseminated by the apostles. In addition, there were

some fragments of pure gnostic teachings, transmitted by a few great Gnostics in Asia Minor and the Roman Empire. When the official Catholic church was being established, particularly during the second century, there were many gnostic systems with differing symbols, but with an identical spiritual nucleus.

Valentine from Alexandria was one of the renowned Gnostics of the time. He lived around 130 AD, and preached in Asia Minor and later in Rome. Valentine expressed his creed with the following words:
«I have become firm and have been redeemed and detach my soul from this aeon and all it has to offer, in the name of Jaos, who has liberated his soul for the salvation in the living Christ.»

According to Valentine, the human world is a fallen world, ruled by an undivine aeon, a concentration of undivine power. Thus there are many aeons. The soul, which possesses Gnosis and recognises its origin, must be liberated and return to the world of the Light, the Primordial Father, the Pleroma or Fullness.

How can the soul that lives in a darkened body be liberated? A soul that possesses inner Gnosis, Valentine says, hears the voice that calls it. It answers and turns to the one calling it. But above all, it knows that it is being called. The soul that is called by its origin, recognises the voice and finds peace. It prepares itself to return home, becomes pleasing to God and is ultimately united with God, the Light, the Beginning of all Life.

The world is completely inhospitable
Valentine was a pupil of Basilides, one of the great Gnostics who taught mainly in Egypt. His answers regarding inade-

quacies and suffering were essentially the same as those of Valentine. *The world is completely inhospitable, it is nothing but misery.* He spoke of the *non-existence of God. God cannot be expressed, is inexpressible, cannot even be expressed or spoken of.*

Just as Valentine, Basilides emphasises that the individual should dissociate from the fallen world and should ascend to his origin. He speaks of the *ascent of the state of being a Child of God*. The Children of God long for freedom. But in order to gain that freedom, they must first recognise that they are fallen beings. After countless wanderings through different lives in the fallen world, during which the individual accumulates ever more guilt and sin, he can finally reach the point where he can leave the world of sin behind, on the basis of insight and love.

The gospel, the message of God, descends from the world of Light to the Children of God. They can ascend to the world of the Light if, as Basilides says, they *lift themselves up*. Liberation first requires insight. The human being must remove, neutralise, his wrong striving, desiring and willing. Again and again Basilides points out that the human being must become *humble*, because in humility the soul can become gnostic. This means recognising, and in this way gradually ascending and returning to the original world.

Attempts to put the Gnosis into a system

Marcion tried to merge the existing gnostic teachings into a system, and in this way to derive a gnostic dogma. The Gnosis and dogma are mutually exclusive. Gnosis is an independent experience of the reality of the Spirit. A Gnostic can testify to it in images and symbols. But his experiences cannot be passed on to others in rules and systems. According to Mar-

cion, certain writings were gnostic, but others did not meet his criteria, so he excluded them from his canon. As the son of a bishop from Sinope, Marcion preached in Rome, and in 144 AD he was excommunicated because of «improper behaviour». He rejected the Old Testament, contending that it could not be of any interest to Gnostics. He considered the apostle Paul to be the central figure and emphasised his teachings. Marcion considered the Gospel of Luke to be the purest representation of the teachings of Christ. He designed a first canon of the New Testament for his followers as the basis of the true teachings. This canon contained the partially altered Gospel of Luke and some of Paul's Letters, which were also reworked. His corrections were mainly focused on influences from the Old Testament.

Turbulent times stimulate seeking

When speaking about the *historical Gnostics*, we should keep in mind that, with the exception of a few original texts, the information stems from church scholars. The question always remains as to how objective the reports about *heretics* really are. Descriptions of gnostic teachings and systems by the church fathers – especially Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen and Epiphanius – show that these were turbulent times, and that the number of gnostic movements must have been considerable.

Valentine, Basilides, Marcion and other Gnostics worked during the first centuries AD. In the third century, a gnostic impulse appeared in Persia led by Mani. He spoke more definitely than his predecessors about the contrast between the fallen world and the Light. He saw a chasm between earthly creation and the world of the Spirit. He, too, believed that our familiar world had not been created by God, but by the powers of darkness, which are thoroughly wicked. The fallen

world is total delusion and darkness. The central issue of Mani's teachings was the certainty that there is a spark of divine light in the dark human being. This light spark is the bridge to the original life. What is called *good* in our fallen world, Mani still considers to be *darkness*. Only a restored link with the Kingdom of Light is truly good. He says:
I am a fragrant seed of the Light, cast into a thick forest of thorns. O, collect me and pick me up! Take me home to the threshing floor of the Holy Law, in the granaries of the Light!

This fundamental attitude, this longing for the Light, marks the Gnostic. We find these characteristics within many gnostic movements, and with the great messengers of the divine reality.

Gnostic communities and their impulses up to our time
The Paulicians formed a gnostic movement that became active during the seventh century in the Byzantine Empire. They rejected the church's cult of Mary, just as they declared themselves against any hierarchy that made its power felt in order to obstruct inner enlightenment. Hundreds of thousands of Paulicians were murdered by the church, up to the end of the eleventh century, as were the Manichaeans before them.

But the Gnosis lived on. For example, its light and power radiated in the community of the Bogomils, who lived predominantly in Bulgaria, led by Bogomil. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the gnostic heritage was passed on from the Bogomils to the Cathars in the South of France. The Cathars formed a purely gnostically-oriented community, but they were outlawed and persecuted by the church, just like the Bogomils. Those who could not, or would not, flee were killed by the so-called orthodox representatives of the Catholic church.

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, the Gnosis reappears in the form of the Templars. And early in the seventeenth century, there was a strong revival in the Rosicrucian movement. Johann Valentin Andreae was considered an important representative of this group. From the classical Rosicrucians there are links with the Freemasons, who were regrouping at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, a new gnostic impulse led to the foundation of the Theosophical Society. Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant played a key role in it. Rudolf Steiner and Max Heindel followed and in 1924, Jan van Rijckenborgh and his fellow workers founded the School of the Golden Rosycross.

All these movements and groups testify to inner Christianity. They describe the way back to God, opened up by the Christ Spirit. These groups can be considered new attempts to realise the true Christianity of Jesus the Christ.

Gnostic impulses within the church

A few spiritual great ones also spun the thread of their inner quest to the true Light within the church, where dogma and hierarchy had increasingly made their influence felt, and the teachings of Christ had degenerated to an all-time low. Master Eckhart, Tauler, Seuse and Jan van Ruusbroec were a few of the important seekers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Master Eckhart spoke of *the soul ground, in which human beings must seek the hidden soul spark*. The human being must unite with this spark in order to be able to merge into the Spirit. With this idea, Eckhart took up the gnostic teachings of the spirit-spark in the heart again. He taught that the birth of God takes place in the soul ground of the human being and not outside him. In addition, he taught that this

experience does not depend on any outside assistance, but rather that a human being can only accomplish this birth by his own work and with the help of the Spirit – in other words, by turning to God. Eckhart even considered the sacraments of the church as superfluous. This is why the church designated some of his teachings as heretical.

Tauler and Seuse were pupils of Eckhart. They emphasised the inner peace a human being should strive for in order to be allowed to behold God. To them, peace was above all *turning around, turning to God*, the unconditional surrender of the I. Rosicrucians say: dying as to nature. The Cathars spoke of the endura.

Faith is a step toward the knowledge of God's will
To mystics, living faith was a step on the path to the knowledge of God's will. Despite all opposition of the church, Eckhart, Tauler and Seuse had the courage to reveal this knowledge, because they were touched by the Divine Spirit. The depth and integrity of their teachings appealed to many people and convinced them. Outside the church they united in a community of laymen, calling themselves *Friends of God*. They understood each other as human beings, who quietly walked the inner path Christ showed them.

In the Low Countries near the sea, Jan van Ruusbroec propagated the same insights concerning the unification of the human being with God. To achieve unity with God was the essence of mysticism. Eckhart expressed his inner experience, which overcame all obstacles, as follows:
One with the One,
one from the One, one in the One and in the One forever.

During the seventeenth century, the church declared the mys-

tic Jacob Boehme a heretic. He wrote down his experiences as an instrument of the living Spirit as follows:
Don't look to me for works... I do not speak of myself, but of what the Spirit shows, which no one can resist. For it depends on His Omnipotence and not on our speculation and willing.

Boehme says that the inner birth of the Deity is the true human destination. He acknowledges that God is not the gentle, innocent, good God, as He was so often represented in his days, but that love and wrath lie deeply anchored in God himself. God's *wrath* is nothing but the irrefutable order and power of the Spirit. When a human being is dissociated from the harmony of this order and turns against it, he will experience it as if it has been turned against him, as wrath. Just as someone swimming upstream experiences that the water obstructs him. Every human being must descend into the depths of his own heart in order to recognise love and wrath there, and, through an inner struggle, break through to Love. To Boehme, the present human being is a human being in development. He is approaching his perfection. On the one hand he has to be grasped by the Spirit, but on the other he has to allow himself to mature, so that the process of perfection can be accomplished.

The threefold signature of the Gnostic
When considering this limited testimony, we might wonder what the Gnostics had in common? Why did they suffer persecution and death for their convictions?

A Gnostic experiences God within himself. He considers the truth to be an inner experience. This is why a Gnostic is convinced that *he is born of God*. This means that he knows his origin; he knows that his innermost being stems from the divine world and not from the transient, earthly world. He

also knows that the divine human being cannot be united with the fallen earthly being. Hence he follows the second principle of the gnostic path: *dying in Jesus!* This expression of the seventeenth-century Rosicrucians refers to the conscious death of the self-maintenance of the earthly human being.

The inner path is clearly outlined

A true Gnostic sees this path clearly before him. He is prepared to walk this path, and to accomplish this process within himself. He knows that no one else can die this death for him, but that he has to accomplish it himself. It is not the historical death of Christ on the cross that liberates the human being, as the church teaches. The imitation of this death in our own being is the path. This concerns the crucifixion of the human being of this nature in our own being. Whoever is touched by the Gnosis knows that Christ must be born, die, and be resurrected in every human being. Thus the human being becomes equal to Christ. This is Christ's message, and the profound experience of the Gnostic.

Greater contrast is hardly imaginable

The Church expects salvation from outside, and separates the human being from the original truth of Christ. The Gnostic strives for the inner way of liberation. A greater contrast is hardly imaginable. After the first step: *being born of God*, the second one follows: *dying in Jesus the Lord*, after which the victory of the third step follows: *being reborn through the Holy Spirit!*

Thus the Gnostics testified to being seized by the Spirit. Once seized, they testified because they would not, and could not, do otherwise. Not testifying would have been a sin against the Spirit. Death and persecution could, therefore,

not deter the classical Gnostics. They went about their work with unperturbed calmness, for they knew that the immortal Spirit had been resurrected in their own beings in order to propagate the living Truth. Thus they were living witnesses to the divine world while still living in their earthly bodies.

Once the gnostic spark in a human being has been kindled, this spark can become a flame, and this flame can become a radiant fire, which can be passed on to others. The gnostic path shows the inner process of Divine genesis. Having been born consciously of God, having died consciously in Jesus, having been reborn consciously through the Holy Spirit, the new soul is consciously united with the Spirit and says: *the Father and I are one.*

The Gnostic experiences the three steps of ascent into the Spirit as his threefold signature. He loses his life for God. In this neutralisation of his old life, he recognises God's love and in this way becomes one with Him. God is Love. His Love permeates all of creation. But humanity has to turn to God's Love. This is why we can read in the Gospel of John:
For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father. (John 10:17-18)

In order to receive the universal Light, in order to stand in the divine Light, a human being must lose his life. This is the way of the Gnosis.

7

Gnosis as inner religion

There are always people who dissociate from the stone tables of the Law in order to let themselves be led by the truth written on the tables of flesh of the heart.

Religion means «to reconnect»: reconnecting with God. In principle, two ways to such a reunification with God can be distinguished: an outer one and an inner one: an outer and an inner religion. In an outer religion, people believe in external events and facts, which will lead to their liberation. On the other hand, in an inner religion people experience that everything has originated from God and belongs to God, just as a drop of water belongs to the ocean or a thought to thinking. To those of an inner religion, redemption is a path – the path to the reunification with God. Their true being becomes one with God again.

Christianity as Gnosis

All religions, including Christianity, were originally inner religions. There is only one inner religion, for there is only one God, one Truth. The founders of religion experienced this divine aspect in their inner being. They laid down all their I-centrality in order to create room for the divine within themselves. Such human beings consciously experience the reunification with the Father, the Spirit. This is why Jesus said: *«I and the Father are one.»* This did not refer to being

equal to an external God the Father, but to the identity of our own true being with the truth which is God.

For their part, the founders of inner religion cleared the path to a reunification with God for their followers. On this path of reunification, Jesus said to his followers: «*Be my followers.*» The experience and the process of becoming conscious of the divine in our own being and a mode of life that activates this divine aspect, was the religion of Jesus and his pupils. Hence, this religion was Knowledge, Gnosis, true, inner religion. Jesus was the prototype of the Gnostic – Gnosis as the conscious experience and realisation of the divine understanding: The Father and I are one.

Separation between inner and outer religion

The example of Christianity clearly demonstrates and enables us to understand how a separation between the inner and the outer religion, between Gnosis and the Church, has come about. We can imagine a human being whose inner being has been touched by the divine forces, and who recognises the path before him. He has probably decided to walk the path of the dissolution of all I-centrality. But gradually the inclinations of the old life gain the upper hand in him again. The inner experience of the living truth withdraws, only the memory of it remains. From these memories, he will construct a comprehensible, central idea: a dogma. And then he will organise his life according to this dogma.

What happens in a single human being can also occur in a group. People who have initially been touched by the living truth, and expressed it in their communal life will, when earthly interests are gaining the upper hand again, turn the truth into a dogma and establish an organisation which represents the «dogma». All I-centred human tendencies can

indulge in the context and organisation of dogma: striving for power, glory and possessions.

Such processes, which can occur in the inner being of a single person and in a group at any time, also occurred on a large scale at the time of original Christianity. The founder, in whom the Truth had lived with an enormous power and who had emanated it as Love, had left the earthly world. In many of his pupils, this truth continued to work in a vivified way and they also expressed this in a vivified way. However, many still had problems in their inner being due to the inclinations of their earthly life. Increasingly, these earthly interests were gaining the upper hand again and were expressed within the functions and leadership of the community.

People who exemplified a spontaneous life in and from the truth became, in this situation, dangerous to the achievements of the people for whom dogma and organisation had become the basis of their life. The «church» then being formed, the outer religion of Christianity, could no longer understand the inner religion and allow it to be expressed. The dogmatists and organisers gradually pushed those who testified to the truth, to the periphery. Even worse, they were excluded and challenged. From being living witnesses to the truth, they became considered heretics who could no longer be understood by those living on the basis of dogma, and who would be savagely persecuted. They had become a danger to dogmatic faith, and to the concept of «redemption» by dogma.

Around 150 AD, a few generations later, a clear, organisational schism had developed between inner and outer Christianity. The inner religion was called «Gnosis», the outer one, «Christianity» or the «church». There was no longer a bridge between the two.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The schism between the «church» and «Gnosis» explains all the judgments that continue to circulate about the Gnosis to this day. The inner understands the outer, because it pervades the outer, but the outer does not understand the inner.

How, for example, can a human being, who is only interested in the outer aspect and to whom the «Father» of humanity and the world is a powerful, external God, understand what a Gnostic means by God as «Father»? To dogmatic people, God the Father is a collection of the best properties of an earthly father. He can be approached in the way a child approaches his father. However, to the human being in whom the truth is consciously alive, the «Father» is the primordial foundation of this truth, in which a human being is embedded as a spiritual being, and who can only be approached when he, like Moses before the burning bush, put off his «shoes»: when he has become free from all earthly ties and personal interests. He does not stand before the «Father» as one person to the other; but the burning bush is the consciousness, kindled in him by the truth, which speaks to him.

By the same token, in inner religion, the «Son» is not a human God who sacrifices himself on a wooden cross for humanity and thereby liberates it, but the Power of Truth that descends into human beings, and in so doing, grants them the possibility of giving up everything earthly for this truth. On the basis of this Truth, which sacrifices itself for humanity and becomes active in it, the liberation from all ties to the earthly world is made possible. Jesus was a human being, who accomplished this process of liberation in the Christ power, in the power of the self-sacrificing truth. Every human being who follows in his footsteps will accomplish this process of libera-

tion in his own being. And thus he contributes, as Jesus did, to the liberation of his fellow human beings. Because, in this way, he propagates the Truth so that it is released within him and aroused in other people.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is the vivification of Truth in the life of an individual and a group. The power of the truth is manifested and unites people in a community that does not depend on personal characteristics and interests. The writings, images, and works of art of this community testify to the Power of the Living Truth.

Faith, hope and Love

The path of the Gnosis is a path of faith, of trusting insight and of Love. To outer religion, faith means to consider dogma to be the truth. A great power can also emanate from this kind of faith because it gives human beings certainty. But this is a certainty that is outward and not based on an inner experiencing of the truth. To inner religion, on the other hand, faith is the form in which the truth, dormant in human beings, becomes initially perceptible. Although a human being is not yet aware of the truth, it awakens an openness in him for new experiences, and it is the motivating force behind these experiences. This is the faith that opens all doors, clears away obstacles and moves mountains. In this power of the truth, a human being's old being can change to the extent that the truth begins to circulate in him as a power and he finally becomes aware of it. Gnosis, knowledge, becoming conscious, is taking place within him. The true human being wakes up within him and the false being can consciously decline. In this way, he consciously accomplishes within himself the death and the resurrection of Jesus. He does not believe in an outer, historical fact, nor does he hope that he will fare «on the Last Day» as Jesus did on Easter, he

already experiences the resurrection in his own being before he physically dies.

In an outer religion, faith alone suffices. On the inner path of the development of the truth within a human being, faith is only the beginning. It leads to Knowledge. Thus, the Knowledge of the Spirit, in the stories from the Bible, is an essential step in the process of liberation of Jesus' disciples. Just think of the scene, in which Peter recognises Jesus as the Christ, as the carrier of the Truth. The letters of Paul also abound with statements about the Knowledge of the Truth. In the letter to the Colossians, for example, Paul asks *«that you may be filled with the Knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.»* (Col.1:9-10) For Paul was also a Gnostic, full of inner religion.

Thus, becoming conscious of the truth is followed by the vivification of the truth in human beings: Love. From then on, a human being is, like Jesus, able to use the forces of the truth, which have been vivified in him, to awaken faith in the truth in other people too, and to open the path of liberation for them. On this path, and nowhere else, all human imperfections will disappear, all illnesses will heal and even death will be overcome. This is not the love the natural human being, probably with admirable efforts for the world and humanity, can realise. It is a new, divine power in a human being, which can only be activated when all aspects of the natural human being have become still. The earthly, neighbourly love is at best a weak reflection of divine love, which is born of God himself.

This is what John the Baptist, also a Gnostic, emphasises in

his Letters again and again. For example: «*Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.*» (1 John 4:7-8)

The dissolution of separation

Does it always have to be the case that a separation between inner and outer religion occurs and that the representatives of outer religion challenge and persecute as heretics those of inner religion? This should not be the case. The only thing necessary is that the representatives of outer religion, just as those of inner religion, take the words from the Gospel of John seriously: «*The Truth will set you free.*» The Truth liberates and sets free. Whoever experiences the truth within himself, does not force anyone to a faith in dogmas, but is filled with an indelible faith in the power of the Truth. He trusts that the Truth will prevail over all errors, without persecution and struggle. For this reason, he will not declare certain religious forms to be the only certain path to liberation and will not separate them from other religious forms.

There have always been people who dissociated themselves from the stone tables of the Law, in order to be led by the truth written on the tables of flesh of the heart, because this Truth calls to them from their innermost being. If the authorities of outer religion would like to limit these people to dogmatic faith, are the stone tables of the Law then the right path to liberation? The Truth will set you free: it will, in time, lead those people who remain, for now, taken up in outer religion, to the insight that the path to liberation is an inner religion that also awaits them. And they, who immediately begin to live from the Truth, will be led by the Truth, to the reunification with the Father of the Truth, the Spirit.

8

Gnosis, revolution of the soul

«Rest a while!» Revolution in our time of crisis, in our restless time.

When academics, having more or less affinity, describe «gnosis» as a revolution, this is relevant only if revolution refers to an inner revolution. Gnosis deviates from its source when individuals join together in a revolutionary, committed cell, or form a community within society. It cannot be said of gnostic groups that they waged a fight against dissenters.

Gnosis is insight.
Gnosis is knowledge of how, why and what for.
Gnosis is seeing how an individual originates,
how he lives and how he disappears.
Gnosis is hearing what someone else is saying
and listening to what this speaking causes in our own being
and making a decision.
Gnosis is perceiving the smell of separation
and experiencing our own smell
and making a decision.
Gnosis is a very individual event.
Gnosis is seeing the individualised power and the individualised space
and knowing that this is where I live and work.
Gnosis is seeing that everything is motion; that nothing is stationary.

Looking for the Gnosis usually happens in a process of counter-motion.
Finding the Gnosis happens at the moment we let go.[1]

On the one hand, gnostic groups were, and are, a form of worship. Some groups have practised sacramental rituals while others have opposed this. On the other hand, they have been schools with a theosophical, cosmosophical or anthroposophical programme. From this starting point, the candidate is able to know where he stands on the basis of inner knowledge of God. He could, or can, say:

When I shall stand at the gate, past the bridge,
past man, past myself,
then You will ask me: has the land in you passed,
has the bridge in you passed, has man in you passed,
have you passed yourself within you?

Will I then say: it has passed?
Lying is impossible because You will see Yourself in me;
and what You cannot see of Yourself in me
I will experience within myself: it has not passed.

Then send me back, across the bridge, into the land,
to the people, to myself;
to dissolve the remainder of what had not passed;
what You did not know within Yourself.

And when I shall return, across the bridge,
from the land of the people
with myself,
then I shall know: there is nothing left that remains
and will prevent You from being Yourself in me.[2]

Gnosis has always protected human beings from that which is no longer life.
It could be regarded as a sign that, in this time of crises, the Gnosis is spoken about so much. In fact, it is spoken and preached about so much that the words of Jesus in Mark 6:30-31 go straight to the heart:
The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them: Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest for a while. For many were coming and going and they had no leisure even to eat.

«Rest a while!»
Revolution in our time of crisis, in our time of restlessness.
«Rest a while!»

As in a mirror...
Gnosis is a revolution in our own being. This revolution can be experienced individually and be reinforced by a group. Revolution also means strategy. Without a strategist there can be no strategy. A gnostic community operates through individuals who are revolutionary within themselves; who feel supported by their community and who are guided by a «teacher», who knows the course of the revolution from his own experience and achievements.

An important goal of gnostic experiencing is «rest», so that those who want to can re-centre themselves. This requires rest after all the turmoil, after all the worrying, after all the tugging at his being.

An example from the Gospel of Thomas (verse 60):
They saw a Samaritan carrying a lamb going into Judea. He said to his disciples: Why does he carry the lamb? They said to him: That he may kill it and eat it. He said to them: So long as

it is alive, he will not eat it, but if he kill it and it become a corpse. They said: Otherwise he will not be able to do it. He said to them: You also, seek for yourselves a place within for rest, lest you become a corpse and be eaten. [3]

Rest as a symbol of the divine

The sphere of the divine and the deity is described as existing, unchanging, within itself, and hence as a haven of rest. Unity, rest, immobility, silence... they are primordial states of the Kingdom of the Light. The Father of the Light is rest.

In the *Apocryphon* or the *Secret Book* of John we can read about the Father of the Light: *His Aeon is indestructible, at rest and existing in silence.* [4]

Rest as the image of the Saviour and his message

The identity of the Saviour and his message is rest. The propagation and the goal of the propagation coincide. Rest is present. Rest has been found and can be described. We know its instrument. It is the gift of fearlessness.

When the end of time has come and the house is no more and the system is no more and a protective space is no more and the group is no more and you and I stand as solitary individuals without light, at the place where the night grasps us, and you and I face a human being, do not speak to him of the house that was, of the light that could be, of the space that was, of the stimulus and the protection of the group that was, but then grant him the gift of fearlessness, then give it to him without wanting it back. [5]

Rest as the image of knowledge

Accepting the liberating word turns a human being into one who knows. Such a human being becomes aware of the possi-

bility of finding rest within himself.

The Gospel of Truth is joy to those who have received from the Father of Truth the gift of knowing him by the power of the Logos. [6]

In the «Ode of Solomon», the prayer of the gnostic resounds: *Lord, may your rest abide with me as well as the fruits of Your love.*

The Saviour said to his disciples: *Already the time has come for us to abandon our labour and stand at rest. For whoever stands at rest will rest forever.* [7]

The fundamental property of Gnosis is rest. The visible quality of someone who receives Gnosis, i.e. who lives out of Gnosis through insight, is rest. The testimony that he lives according to his insight, is rest. Using this key opens the testaments, the texts, the gospels which have been passed on to us.

A testament has to be opened before it can be executed. A testament can be accepted or rejected. Gnostic texts are testaments. They precipitate from the activity of words among human beings. To a certain extent it is true when it is said that something can exist only when it can be, and is, named. Rest is a word that represents a state of being. A human being reaches this state by coming to terms with the «story» in which, and from which, he lives. For most people this is a complicated story. Many gnostic texts are complicated texts.

Walking the gnostic path, the gnostic pilgrimage, possibly via the testaments or stories of others, develops our own complexity. Gnostic texts then work as a mirror. A mirror does not say anything unless we are standing before it. A gnostic

text does not speak unless we are standing fully before it. Hence, science cannot unveil these gnostic texts, unless it unveils itself. Or in other words: he, who seeks within himself for the essence and the aim of the text regarding the purpose of his own life, unveils a gnostic text. This essence is rest. It is inner peace!

Gnosis appears in our time to protect what is getting lost, and to protect the human birthright, the right to happiness. The Buddha says: «Buddha or Buddhi means insight, wisdom, deep understanding.»

Everybody wants to live happily and happiness is everyone's birthright. To reach the happiness that is our right we must put into practice the self-purifying process prescribed by the Buddha:

1 *Rejecting unwholesome thoughts that have arisen;*

2 *Eliminating unwholesome thoughts as they arise;*

3 *Nurturing wholesome thoughts that have arisen, by putting them into practice every day.*

4 *The development of wholesome thoughts which have not yet arisen.* [8]

Rest as the final destination of the gnostic pilgrimage

In the Gospel of Thomas we read (verse 50):

Jesus said:
If they say to you:
Whence have you come?,
tell them:
We have come from the light,
the place where the light came into being through itself alone.
It stood, and it revealed itself in their image.
If they say to you:

Who are you?, say:
We are his sons, and we are the elect of the living Father.
If they ask you:
What is the sign of your Father in you?,
tell them:
It is a movement and a rest. [9]

Happiness is a human birthright. The condition is rest. The way, the means, is insight. And all of this together can be called Gnosis. This mirror is also present today. If its activity is to be experienced, its relevance must be tested by a person of this time. Then Gnosis will become an active power in today's human beings. With respect to this, the Gospel of Thomas, verse 91, states:

They said to him:
Tell us who thou art, that we may believe in thee.
He said to them:
You test the face of the heaven and the earth,
and him who is before you; you do not know,
and you know not to test this moment. [10]

1, 2, 5 Emiel de Keyser, When you and I stand as solitary individuals.

3, 9 ,10 Gospel of Thomas, transl. W.R. Schoedel.

4 The Apocryphon of John, transl. Frederik Wisse.

6 The Gospel of Truth, transl. Robert M. Grant.

7 The Dialogue of the Saviour, transl. Stephen Emmel.

8 K. Sri Dhammananda, How to Live without fear and worry.

9

Gnosis – Basis for the New Man

The gnostically inclined human being receives the healing forces of the Holy Spirit.

The Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross distinguishes between the earthly and the heavenly human being. The nature-born, earthly personality has a physical body, an etheric body, and an astral body. The microcosm has a monadic flame and an etheric and astral aspect. In addition, we know that the earthly personality was not created as an end in itself. A plan underlies its aeons of development: it must devote itself to a healing process by a sanctifying mode of life. This means that the personality must surrender to a process of healing and purification, thus helping the microcosm develop its latent properties and powers again. In this way, the earthly personality makes the return of the microcosm to its original realm of life possible.

The plan of the Logos

The plan of the Logos enables the microcosm and the personality to merge into a single being. Through an alchemical development, the two must unite into one being. The Spiritual School calls this process *transfiguration*. This is extensively discussed, because transfigurism is one of the pillars of the gnostic teachings of liberation. Through a series of developments, the growing new human being acquires properties and powers, which far surpass the possibilities of the earthly personality. They should certainly not be confused

with the properties and powers that can be acquired by means of certain occult methods.

The, above-mentioned, new state of consciousness and life can only be realised by following the path of inner liberation. This path cannot be unlocked by any power of the earthly personality or by occult practices, but is only accessible through the Rose of the heart, the last remnant of the divine life. A threefold activity of the Gnosis supports this process. Three divine, magnetic influences approach the candidate of the mysteries. They are also called the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and they guide the candidate to self-knowledge, to the recognition of God, and finally to transfiguration. The activity of the Holy Spirit breaks up everything old and builds up new properties and powers.

The calling stream of the power of the Gnosis

When the calling and arousing powers of the Gnosis touch the Rose of the Heart, the new powers do not develop immediately. Rather, a regrouping of the dialectical ethers takes place, so that the activity of the two lower ethers decreases and the two higher dialectical ethers begin to play a dominant role. This causes the centres of the heart and head sanctuaries to be influenced, and humanitarian, religious, artistic and intellectual reactions to result from it. Nothing more.

Ignited by the Spirit of God

Whenever a human being, after many experiences on his path through life, discovers that his dialectical aspirations with respect to humanitarian, religious, artistic and/or intellectual endeavours, have not produced any liberating results, he begins – filled with this insight – *to lift his eyes to the hills, from whence his help will come*, as it is expressed in the Bible. He becomes ready for the first activity of the Gnosis. He is

ignited by the Spirit of God. If on the path to self-knowledge, the decision is reached to clear away all inner unholiness and impurity, and if this struggle is taken seriously and pursued tenaciously, the range of action of the spirit-spark atom is expanded. Then a new, unearthly power is born in the heart sanctuary. It is the true faith, of which we can also read in the Bible. It is a power of light and strength, which enables a human being to move mountains.

The power of faith is experienced consciously. This power purifies the blood and dissolves karma. This is why the Holy Language states: *Your faith has made you well* and *Your faith has liberated you from all sin*. Of course, this faith has nothing to do with imposed faith, dogmas and historic accounts. It is the result of the flow of mercy that is released when we use this healing force correctly by an appropriate mode of life. Then, the candidate experiences the second divine touch. Next, he must die in the power of the Son.

Dying in Jesus

The second divine activity causes a series of changes in the earthly personality. The candidate must gradually adjust his mode of life to the sevenfold Christ-centred powerfield of the Spiritual School. He must live according to the requirements of a life field, of which the life substance does not stem from this world, nor is it maintained by it. If he succeeds, the medulla will, at the right moment, open as a chalice for the forces of gnostic light. The heart directs itself upward. A new respiration develops. The blood circulation changes, as does the activity of the organs of the endocrine system, which in turn affect the blood. The candidate becomes aware of new possibilities. The new respiration means that through the opening of the medulla, ether forces of a higher vibration can be absorbed into the blood. First, they cause the brain

cells to change. The candidate becomes increasingly open to the four holy foods.

This is not a mystical process. Through the second divine touch, a physical link is created with a power to which the candidate gradually submits, and to which he must completely surrender through an intelligent mode of life. At this point the candidate communes humbly with his Creator, as we can read in the Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross. He becomes silent before God, the psalmist says. The I, the earthly consciousness, must renounce its natural desires. The Rosicrucians speak of *dying in Jesus the Lord.* These activities of the second gnostic touch begin in the head. Important organs are found there, such as the pituitary gland, the pineal gland, and the cerebral cortex, which are usually damaged by the wrong use of the mind. They must be purified and renewed in order to be able to partake of the process of gnostic sanctification. Next, all the other organs of the personality are affected, because the twelve pairs of cranial nerves radiate from the head throughout the whole body. In this way, new ether activities influence the blood, the nerve fluid and the consciousness, and the whole organism gradually withdraws from the grip of dialectics. Only after this preparation, can the third gnostic touch become possible, and because of it, transfiguration, or the Alchemical Wedding. The Holy Spirit destroys everything old, and builds the new divine powers.

The seven powers of the Holy Spirit

The original human being possesses seven properties that correspond to the sevenfold world. On the basis of the fundamental properties of the divine world, this human being can develop a series of powers. The condition for acquiring these properties is, however, that the current human being has

overcome the limitations and damage of dialectics. He has been enabled to do this by the touch of the first and the second divine powers. By explaining these powers, we run the risk of replacing the original properties by those of the cultivated or occult human being. Personal powers are always aimed at the preservation and cultivation of the personality; however refined their form.

The first power of the true human being is the divine Love. The highest power is always Love or the Light of God. This is why it is said that man will one day walk in the Light as God himself is in the Light.

The second power is wisdom. The purified mind can catch a glimpse of this wisdom, while the ordinary, I-centred intellect is neither suitable nor able to do so.

The third power is the will, the high priest in the human temple, which, supported by the two other properties of love and wisdom, only executes God's will.

The fourth power is the mental power. Supported by love and wisdom and stimulated by the new will, new ideas, born of the Spirit, can be formed, down to the smallest details. This mental structure should, of course, possess vital power. This is why, fifthly, there is the power to concentrate dynamic energy. This energy corresponds to the general principle of life. In this context, the ancient wisdom speaks of the kundalini-shakti.

The sixth property is the power of form manifestation. This refers to speaking the creative Word, by which images charged with vital power are realised in matter.

In the seventh property, the six others have been combined. From the first six powers, the six essential forces are assimilated, and radiated into the seventh power. This makes it possible for everything that has been realised with the first six properties, to be used in the only correct way in the service of the great plan of universal plan of creation.

Corresponding to these properties, which develop gradually, there are seven focal points in a human being, called the seven chakras. These seven fundamental centres have degenerated in the fallen, earthly human being. The system of chakras occupies a central position in the process of sanctification. Only through the restoration of the original functions of the seven chakras, will the human being again be able to use the seven primordial powers. The regeneration of the seven chakras and their activities, in a gnostic sense, can only occur when the rose in the heart has been awakened and become active, and it is on this basis, that the first and second gnostic touches, those of the Father and of the Son, have taken place.

Reversing the rotation of the chakras

We can, more or less, activate six of these seven powers by using certain yoga exercises and occult methods. However, the result will be that the chakras are going to rotate more quickly in the usual direction. And this will result in a stronger radiation of, and link with, the forces of fallen nature. The properties and powers originating from this have a range of action that is limited to this, and yonder, side of earthly life. This always brings about crystallisation and an ever-closer link with the dialectical zodiac. Thus we can now understand that only on the basis of a total break-up and reorganisation of our earthly form, can the aim of the reconstruction of the true man be attained. Hence, not by the cultivation of the personality, or by personality splitting, but only through trans-

figuration will the new powers be manifested and the divine human being grow in the microcosm. The gnostically-inclined human being receives the healing forces of the Holy Spirit, which gradually stop the rotation of the chakras, so that they can begin to rotate in the opposite direction. In this way, a human being forges a link with the powers of the divine nature, and then totally different powers can develop; and the seven previously discussed properties will become available to the candidate on the path of liberation.

The seven properties of the new man are also expressed in the seven brain cavities. When a human being walks the path of liberation, the seven brain cavities become open to the divine prana. Then the seven brain cavities – or the sevenfold rose of the head – experience the healing forces of the Holy Spirit, and the old life principle will be overcome. As soon as the sevenfold fire of the Holy Spirit burns in the seven brain cavities, we can speak of the seven harmonies: the song of love, the song of wisdom, the song of the higher will, the song of the power of reason, the song of concentrated dynamic energy, the song of the newly manifested form and, finally, the song of the connecting power, which joins the six preceding songs into a perfect unity of the seven powers.

H P Blavatsky says in *The Voice of the Silence* that the human being can only set his foot on the upper rung of the ladder, the ladder of mystical tones, if he hears the voice of his inner God in seven ways. And the seventh tone is intertwined with the other six. The six activities merge into the seventh power.

These seven powers restore access to the sevenfold microcosm and open the seven eternal gates. The circle of the seven new properties in the perfect human being has been closed.

The natural human being is the servant of the soul

In this way, the old powers of the natural human being can also be renewed one day and become servants of the renewing forces and powers in the microcosm. The mind, liberated from the influences of the auric being, can thus be irradiated by the higher mental body; the new consciousness. Thus purified and cleansed, the mind is capable of assimilating and processing the radiation of the new thinking faculty, which is active as a new consciousness, in the only way possible. The astral body is also susceptible to gnostic influences and a new respiration becomes possible. In this way, all atoms of the human system are charged with new light power, enabling new perceptions. The etheric body must react to this, so that it can be irradiated by the light of the monadic flame. The result will be that the atoms of the physical body also change due to these new radiations.

At this point the human being has a new mentality, new feelings, a new I, and a totally new consciousness at his disposal. These new properties also control the new ethers, the four holy foods. They can be attracted, joined and split. On the basis of these seven new powers, the gnostic human being can use the four, divine, threefold ethers. Or, as expressed in the Bible, *eat of the twelve loaves of bread of the Presence*. This new human being has a totally new fourfold personality, built by the new soul, at his disposal. Great changes also occur in the auric firmament. Twelve new stars or power centres appear, which assimilate the new ether forces. These are the powers of the twelve redeemers of the treasury of the light.

Fishers of human souls

Because of his new powers, the candidate is called *a master of the stone*. He uses these powers to continue the process until he is victorious over everything temporal. However, with

these powers and faculties he will be especially able to help seeking human beings. He becomes a fisher of human souls, as he is called in the Bible. He can cast his net on the right side, and his load will not tear it. This net symbolises his aura, or respiration field, which both attracts and rejects. The new human being will be able to catch everything in his net that is in harmony with his new powers. Everything that does not correspond with these powers, will be rejected. And his catch of fish will be blessed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

10

Presence of the Gnosis in the world

The young-gnostic Brotherhood has spread a powerfield over the world in order to lead seeking human beings to and across the bridge.

The Gnosis and the world are two different vibration fields. The Gnosis and the world do not belong to the same order. As fields of life, they are separated from each other. Through thinking, combinations of these two fields are created, resulting in grief and persecution.

The Gnosis is the Logos, the source of all life. Gnosis is manifested in and through the Spirit, in all-encompassing love, light, power and universal wisdom. The counterpart of the original divine manifestation is the imperfect world of opposites, of limited intellect and selective love, a world of appearances.

We are speaking of fields, because in physics a field is considered a specialisation of attributes, the particular quality of a space. The Gnosis and the world are, therefore, not separated by space and time. They exist simultaneously and in the same place, but due to their qualities they are totally separated. The Gnosis is absolute and perfect, not bound to space and time. Our world is a world of opposites, imperfect, and bound to space and time. If we do not see both fields as separate, mystifications develop, as if the *Gnosis* were to be found in the

hereafter. But the *hereafter* is only the subtle counterpart of the world of gross matter. Joy and grief, reward and punishment, heaven and hell are all opposites within the fallen world.

A field originates from a source

History shows that the field of the Gnosis touches the field of dialectics again and again, so that the absolute and the contradictory, the eternal and the temporal, perfection and relativity touch each other. How can two incompatible poles be linked? In physics, it is said that a field originates from a source. Each field has its own source, and each field emanates its own properties. The field of the Gnosis also originates from a source; it is the manifestation of the properties of this source. One cannot, however, imagine or meditate a magnetic field into existence. This is also true with regard to a gnostic field. The field originates from the source, and not the other way around.

Contact between two incompatible fields

All these historic, gnostic impulses make us wonder why the Gnosis and the world must constantly approach each other. And whether such a contact has also taken place in our time? The answer to the first question is given by the state of humanity. Humanity lives on the basis of the consciousness of the field of this world, it lives in opposites, imperfection, and transience. However, in a human being there is also a principle that is not bound to this world consciousness, but which stems from the field of the Gnosis and does not belong here. This principle, this Spirit principle, urges a human being to return to the field of his origin. The presence of this Spirit principle does not, however, guarantee the possibility of experiencing this Spirit principle consciously. This is why the gnostic field is manifested through messengers who build a bridge between both fields. These messengers consti-

tute the source of an intermediary field, a bridge. And thanks to this temporary bridge, the forces of the gnostic field and those of the fallen world can co-exist for a certain period of time. The bridge represents an intermediary field, by means of which the Universal Brotherhood can intervene and accomplish its plan of salvation. Countless rescue operations have already been undertaken in this way.

Such a rescue operation has also developed in this modern age. The Young-gnostic Brotherhood has spread a powerfield over the world to guide seekers to, and across, the bridge. The pioneers who have created this powerfield renounced all personal honour. They felt linked only with the Universal Brotherhood, and devoted their lives to their task without reservations. This source of pure strength thus attracted the hearts of many people. They have joined forces with the pioneers in a singleness of purpose, pioneered and built the bridge solid and strong. Thus, the Spiritual School of the Modern Rosycross has become an intermediary field in the world. This gnostic field offers every seeker the opportunity to overcome himself and surrender himself. *But to all who receive him, he gave the power to become children of God.*

Like attracts like

Regardless of the strength of the source, a field can only attract that which has polarity with its properties. Thus, a magnet can only attract iron, and the Gnosis can only attract that which is, by nature, gnostic. The Spirit-spark atom in a human being is gnostically inclined, because it stems from the field of the Gnosis. But the earthly human being is not gnostically inclined, and hence is not attracted by gnostic forces. This shows that we cannot speak of lack of love with regard to the natural human being, for which the Gnostics are blamed, but of the fulfilment of a universal law. Like attracts

like. This law guarantees the link between God and the light principle in a human being, wherever he may be. On the one hand, the human being partakes of the earthly field, and on the other, due to the Spirit-spark atom, he partakes of the field of the Gnosis. His daily life pushes him to make a choice. Because temptation and deception are great, and hence making a choice is not always easy, the Universal Gnostic Chain puts a gnostic source surrounded by a gnostic field in the world. Whoever recognises this field, tastes this source, can make his choice and will then be helped along. In our time, the Spiritual School of the Modern Rosycross fulfils this function.

The closer to the source, the stronger the field

All the forces are concentrated in the source. The closer to the source, the stronger the effect. The closer to the source of a gnostic field, the stronger is the activity and the greater the help offered. Because the field of this nature and the field of the Gnosis are strictly separated, the activity of the gnostic field does not work on the natural plane, but the forces and the properties stem, rather, from the Supernature, from the Gnosis. A gnostic field, therefore, produces not natural forces, but an unearthly force that calls and attracts the Christ principle in a human being. All earthly methods of research and evaluation fail in this respect, because the earthly consciousness does not have access to the Gnosis.

Yet, there is a possibility to perceive the activity of a gnostic field, provided the investigator does not remain outside, but enters, unprejudiced and yearning, into this field in order to seek and experience its source. Of course, unprejudiced does not mean rash and without self-examination. It means being free from the cliché standards that are common in the field of nature. Unprejudiced also means: having an open and recep-

tive heart. This requires pure faith. This kind of faith has nothing to do with being naive. It is the certainty that the source will be manifested by an interaction with the field.

Wherever the Gnosis encounters the human being, insight and influences develop which seize and change the entire human being. An important insight is that the purpose of life is not the link with the Gnosis, but being totally absorbed in the transformation by the Gnosis. This is the purpose of life, and every human being is called to it. The seeker has reached the point where he understands the need for change on the basis of his own experience. Thus, he enters a gnostic field and prepares himself for this change. And the gnostic field takes him up into its protective power, and nourishes and guides his life renewal with its liberating power. The truth is manifested in the practice of daily life. Thus, the path of liberation is entered. The truth accompanies the human being on the way to the Light. The Universal Truth is demonstrated in the process of total renewal, not only when the goal is attained. This is why whoever sets out on the path, is a witness to the Universal Truth. And he testifies with joy and gratitude.

Life in a gnostic powerfield involves renewal

A field and its silent inhabitant have nothing to say to each other. The inhabitant does not even notice the field! But if he moves in the direction of the source, new life is created in him. Moving toward the Gnosis means withdrawing from the demands of the old nature and giving priority to the gnostic life. Thinking, feeling and acting, concentrate on the gnostic requirement. The new life develops unconstrained.

Thus the candidate continues. And, the gnostic powerfield becomes a light field to him. He receives a new consciousness

and is no longer bound to the personality. This new consciousness leads to firsthand knowledge of the Supernature, something the personality will never be able to attain. This is the knowledge that comes firsthand from God, Gnosis.

Powers are invisible

Until now, no one has seen a power. Power can only be perceived by its effect. Lines of force of a magnet are not visible as such, but their effect is shown with iron filings. If fine iron filings are sprinkled on a glass plate above a magnet, the particles are ordered according to the effects of the magnetic force. Gnostic force is not visible either, but its effects can be shown, because it works in the structure of a spiritual school, which, after all, is the body, the form, in which the force is expressed. This is why the effect of a force should never be confused with the force itself, or the organisation be confused with the purpose it serves. The organisation of a gnostic field is the structure of force lines by which the emanating power of the Gnosis can reach the seeker. In this sense, the power-field of the Spiritual School of the Modern Rosycross encompasses the whole world and demonstrates its activity from north to south and from east to west. In all the working fields of the Young-gnostic Brotherhood, there are focal points of concentrated power that the seeker can enter to orientate himself, and where those who partake of this field are fellow builders for its maintenance and expansion. In this way, the call of the Gnosis resounds all over the world.

It is a great privilege that we cannot only speak about the Gnosis in our time, but also that its power can be received for life renewal. Thus, eternity has entered into time. Step by step, it is possible to approach it and to enter it. Through the open door of the intermediary field, the touch of the Gnosis becomes a living experience. The love of God leads the seeker

to insight and – provided he reacts in the right way – to fundamental change.

This is why it is said that the Gnosis is a fire that purifies and liberates the human being. This fire is a light on the path by which the human being leaves the field of space and time, the tomb of matter, and enters the field of the Gnosis, eternity.

II

«The Clockmaker» by Gustav Meyrink

The seeker with his sick heart must entrust himself to a higher authority, which he experiences and accepts as such.

What happens to an incarnating soul? What experiences and stages of consciousness does it have to go through? What is the purpose of each new incarnation? And how does someone reach liberating insight, so that he can be saved from the wheel of birth and death?

Gustav Meyrink asks all these questions in his story «The Clockmaker». He describes what a seeker on the path experiences: impulses from the spirit-spark, the emotions of the seeking soul and the reactions of the personality. He sketches the obstacles and the dangers, but also the helping forces and the patterns of development on the path.

The story tells about a man who brings his valuable clock to an antique dealer in order to have it repaired. It is not an ordinary clock, but a very valuable specimen, bearing highly peculiar symbols. It shows a man with women's breasts and legs like serpents; his head has the shape of that of a rooster. In his right hand he carries a sun, in his left a whip. Where the numbers should be, there are flowers, animals and demons. Instead of twelve signs, this clock has fourteen and it has only one hand. The symbols represent the potential forces in the human being, of which he can become aware at a later

stage. Inside the clock are the words: «Summa scientia – nihil scire», the highest knowledge is to know nothing. The antique dealer studies the clock for a long time and decides that he will not be able to repair it. But he has seen these clocks before, and he knows that they have been designed by a «lunatic». This clock, too, appears to have been made by this «lunatic», and he is the only one who can repair it.

Interruption of the normal pattern of life

This story can be seen as a description of the five steps on the path of inner liberation. The first step starts with the clock, symbol of the no longer functioning human heart. The owner of the clock has a heart attack, which is almost fatal. This shows that, first of all, an interruption of the ordinary pattern of life has to occur. Life has to change direction. The clock has to be repaired, but the owner is not able to do it himself, because he does not know what to do. He calls for help at the antique dealer's. The latter would like to help him, but is not able to do so, because this concerns something greater than himself. This is why he sends the owner on.

The clock can be seen as a symbol of the human heart and the owner as the personality who should go the path. The antique dealer is the soul who acts as an intermediary. He can be compared to the Johannine human being. He knows that there is something greater, something different. And he can show the way to others. But he himself has to stay behind. John said: *Another, who is greater than I, will come after me.* The antique dealer also refers to something that surpasses him. Although he does not know where and how this greater something can be found, he does know that this other something really exists. He warns the seeker who has arrived at this point in life: *He who sets out seeking for this other something, walks extraordinary paths.* These paths look insane to the ordinary world.

What does a person experience at this stage of the path? His old life no longer satisfies him. He knows that he needs help and resorts to familiar institutions. But these cannot really help him. They cannot fulfil his longing for healing. Still, he experiences that there is help, that there is a path which he has to go. However, he has to search for it himself. Thrown upon his own resources – an outside authority cannot be of any help to him – he is forced to submerge into his inner being and find a way within himself.

Preremembrance becomes active

On the second step, childhood memories of the key figure surface. He remembers that he had heard about a «lunatic» who supposedly lived somewhere behind a wall. This wall, behind which the clockmaker lives, is the foundation of a church that will have to be built later. Hazy images are beginning to take shape. The owner of the clock starts to ask himself questions. Why should the clockmaker not exist? Would it not be worthwhile to go and look for him? Did he not think of this before? What prevented him from doing so? The image of the «lunatic», as he had seen it in the past, is suddenly clear to him: an old man with snow-white hair and a remarkably small head; his eyes looking piercingly at him, the owner of the clock. He feels a strong urge to overcome his fear of the «lunatic» – of the images in his inner being – once and for all. In the story, this wish is expressed by the words: «If only the clock were to run again!» If only the heart could be made to come back to life again! The owner of the clock leaves the antique dealer's and sets out to look for the person who will be able to repair his clock.

Farewell to dialectics

This is the third step on the path. He is walking alone in the empty, dark streets, the symbol of the dialectical world, which

seem empty to him. He is no longer what he used to be. His memories have given him something new. He is not yet conscious of this new thing, but he entrusts himself to his inner guide, and he follows a path his feet seem to know exactly: a path from within.

When he, in this way, as a seeker, surrenders to his inner guide, the path begins. He enters an as yet unknown world, which is nevertheless familiar to him in his innermost depth. But not until he reaches his goal, does he fully realise its extent. The search for the other one begins. The longing of the heart and his desire for healing have become so great, that fear and doubt are overcome. He follows his feet and they show him the way. The path leads him away from the city, from the turmoil of ordinary life, and he arrives at White Street.

What does the city mean in this context? It can be compared to dialectical life with all its human wishes, urges and desires. The seeker has to leave this old world behind if he wants to walk spiritual paths. He enters into an unknown new world.

What is White Street? White symbolises purity. White represents all colours: the seven rays of the Spirit are contained in white Light. In this way, White Street can be seen as a symbol of the way to perfection, a symbol of the path that leads back to the perfect world of the divine Spirit.

What happens at this stage? Driven by his inner being, the human being has set out. But he has hardly walked a short distance, when «black serpents, lured out of the earth by the sharp light of the moon», cling to his heels. The black serpents are a sharp contrast with the white street. They try to keep the seeker from his path, and will do anything to pull him back into his old world. The serpents are thoughts and forces that

want to poison him. They arouse doubt, fear and discouragement. They try to destroy his newborn hope and poison his heart with their paralysing venom. Every seeker experiences this. He sets out full of joy, because he has rediscovered an immeasurable treasure. For the time being, this joy lifts him above any doubt. But after some time, new doubts, the black serpents, gnaw at him. The mind, the communication channel with the old world, tries to get a grip on him again in order to take him back and prevent his progress on the path.

Guided by the image of the Spirit

What can the owner of the clock do about it? All of a sudden he turns left in order to shake off the serpents. Suddenly, he alters his thoughts. He changes the direction of his thoughts. No sooner has he done so, than unexpected help comes along. This moment can be considered the fourth step on the path. Suddenly his shadow springs up before him from out of the ground and devours all the serpents. The shadow is the controlling principle of the spiritual world. The original Light comes to help the seeker and leads him away from the darkness of doubt and fear. When the Light itself takes control, a human being can only see a shadow of this. But this alone is enough to make fear, discouragement and worries disappear. And they are replaced by a great joy and confidence.

This also happens to the owner of the precious clock. In the shadow he recognises his guide, which shows him the way unwaveringly and unerringly. And he knows he can entrust himself to this certainty. He follows the shadow of the light without paying attention to where he is going. His doubts are dissolved, he can continue on his path.

After a long journey, the shadow disappears into a deep ditch and the owner of the clock is alone. He knows that he has

reached his goal. Once the link with the origin has been re-established, the human being can walk the path of inner spiritual liberation with certainty. He carries the divine Light within him. He no longer needs the shadow. When he has reached the goal, the source, the helpers withdraw. They have done their job. The human being is now standing in the Light.

The journey home

On the fifth step of the path, the owner of the clock is in the room of the clockmaker, who is able to repair the clock – his heart. No sooner has he come into this room, than a feeling of endless certainty flows through him. He is blessed with unlimited enlightenment. He has a feeling of having come home. This immeasurable enlightenment rises up from his own heart, from the soul, which knows and experiences that it is saved.

This certainty is further strengthened when he reads the words engraved on the face of a clock in the room of the clockmaker: «Summa scientia – nihil scire». These are the words that are also written on his valuable clock. Now he knows that he is in a world in which totally different laws apply than in the old world. Not the old knowledge that has been learned, but the experience of not wanting to know, is what is relevant. These are the exact opposites. He also realises: it is not important how someone reaches this state of being, but that this state has been reached. He must be able to let it happen.

Healing the disease of time

In the room of the clockmaker there are many timepieces, of all different sizes and kinds. They represent various human types. *All of them had become ill and I have cured them*, the clockmaker says. And he explains what the clocks – that is, the human hearts – had suffered from: *Their hearts had become ill, because they believed in time. But time steals the*

peace from the heart. This is why he has liberated them from the darkness of time and returned them to the peace of the heart. Only when the human heart becomes still and hence neutral, can it perceive reality. Then it will discover the true human task: to return to the source, to God. Once this insight has come about, time will sink into nothingness. Insight is a condition for this peace. This insight cannot be achieved by the ordinary mind, by ordinary thinking: *The living knowledge comes naturally. A human being should not want to know anything.* What is expressed by this? Our ordinary thinking is an illusion. It will not bring pure insight. The only thing it can create is *ceaseless new hours, ceaseless new illusions*.

The mind is unmasked as inadequate. Something else is at stake here, namely faith, hope and love. Those who have truly fathomed the true meaning of the motto: *summa scientia – nihil scire*, the clockmaker says, *will put their clocks under his protection.* The others will leave disillusioned. The seeker with his sick heart should entrust himself to a higher authority, which he experiences and accepts as such. He surrenders his heart to the protection of this other thing. Only through this self-surrender, through trust and faith in the possibility of healing, through love for the world of the divine Spirit, can a human being become whole again, and the clock be repaired.

Conditions for repair

What conditions does a heart have to fulfil in order to undergo this process? It should not be hardened. A hardened heart cannot hear the voice of God and cannot absorb the activity of the Spirit. The heart must have dissociated from the world of appearances and have turned towards the world of the original life. In the story, the principal character has arrived at this stage. He hands his clock, his heart, with «a silent prayer» over to the clockmaker. This silent prayer is

the longing for healing, the total surrender to the Spirit.

The ancient one, the clockmaker – the spirit principle itself – looks at the heart benevolently. In total peace, the owner surrenders to the process of healing. At first, the ancient one seems the opposite of his own being, something which is looking into his inner being. Gradually, it becomes clear that *the ancient one* is not outside, but within him. He understands that the spiritual sun, the spirit-spark, *a shadow-bud of the soul*, has developed within him, almost unnoticed. He becomes aware that this spark has always been there, but that he had forgotten it. Due to this insight, deep grief and a searing sadness well up in him. Even now, doubt tries to overwhelm him.
Then the clockmaker changes into the other one again. The repair has been successful. The clock is ticking quietly and regularly again, exactly in time with the rhythm of the blood. The clockmaker returns the timepiece and explains why it had stopped. It is due to the dangers that threaten every candidate on the path of inner liberation. He explains where they stem from and how they can be overcome.

Victory over time and death
The clock had stopped at the second hour. This is the hour of the bull or the ox, the hour of attachment to wilful, dialectical life. The clockmaker explains that this second hour is fatal, as are its eleven sisters, which symbolise the other signs of the zodiac. They chain man to his auric being. The story tells that in the second hour the call to return to God resounds. If a human being cannot hear this call and does not turn around, he declines in matter. He is caught by the demons in his blood. They cloud his consciousness and prevent his liberation.

The symbols of the clock represent the ties between the human being and the etheric, astral and mental worlds. The

flowers refer to the etheric world, the animals to the astral world and the demons to the mental world. The owner can only escape from this circle if he overcomes the I, especially in its second hour.

The clock has only one hand. This means that it corresponds with eternity. There are fourteen symbols representing hours: seven positive and seven negative aspects of the Spirit. Because of this, the Spirit can overcome the old zodiac. The clock is adorned with Abraxas, the mythical creature of ancient Gnostic traditions. Abraxas is a figure with the head of a rooster, the symbol of alertness, and serpents for legs – the sexual drive that has to be overcome. The whip in the left hand symbolises unconscious emotions and desires which have to be controlled. The sun in the right hand indicates conscious spiritual action as a result of the link with the Sun – the Divine World. A hermaphrodite refers to the hermetic path of the alchemical unification.

When the human heart shows this signature, it can overcome the twelve aeons of the dialectical field of life. How can this victory be achieved? By loving God. The clockmaker says: *This one has saved you from the death of the second hour, from the addiction to the earthly world, because you preserved it lovingly for all your life and have never been irritated by its time, a time which is not of this earth.*

The clock is the heart. In the heart lies the shadow-bud or the spirit-spark. Whoever protects this inner principle and walks the illuminated path, will be guided to the Light by inner truth. Finally, the clockmaker says: *Now you know the path to me.* The bearer of the timepiece can go to the source directly and partake of its Light. *Perhaps I can teach you how to cure sick clocks.* Whoever lives in the Light himself, can also heal others.

The story ends with the words: *Nihil scire – omnia posse*, to know nothing – to be able to do anything. The old human being, the old knowledge, has to withdraw. Then the new human being, who has overcome the aeons of the dialectical world, can discern the new powers, heal through them and work with them. Living from these spiritual powers, he will be able to do anything. He cures, by linking others with the true knowledge, the Light.

Unification with the divine life

Summarising, we might say that the first step is the call to turn around. On the second step, the preremembrance awakens. The human being is stimulated to listen to it. On the third step, he has, though still not conscious, set out on the path. The old world loses its influence; the new world gradually opens up before him. On the fourth step, he has resolutely set out, but the forces of the old world besiege him and he is exposed to temptations. By taking the fifth step, he has come close to his goal. He has achieved a direct link with the divine Light. He receives new insight from this source. The turning around of the first step becomes the true homecoming on the fifth step. The human being experiences his true destination. He is liberated from the wheel of birth and death. The purpose of his existence in this world becomes clear to him: the reunification with the divine, through revivification of the spirit-spark in the heart. The condition for this is that he leaves everything old behind.

Summa scientia – nihil scire. The new human being does not use the new power, *omnia posse*, for his own ends, but puts himself in the service of humanity. He himself will become a clockmaker, a healer of human hearts.

Gustav Meyrink, *De vier maanbroeders, De Klokkenmaker* (The four moon brothers, The Clockmaker), Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1982.

12

Gnosis and modern ideologies

The human being projects the perfection of the true Self outwardly onto newly created social structures without wanting to accomplish a fundamental change of his being.

We are inclined to relate ideological political movements like, for example, fascism and communism, with «Gnosis». This is based on a serious, fatal misconception with regard to the Gnosis, many theoreticians of political science are cursed with.[1] How does this misconception develop?

Gnosis is Knowledge in the sense of attaining consciousness. The Gnostic becomes conscious of the world of the Spirit, which is hidden in the innermost being of every human being. Next, Gnosis is the longing, the longing for salvation, for attaining this consciousness. Attaining this consciousness requires a human being to give up, dissolve and overcome his I-centrality. This I-centrality is active on two levels: on the level of the natural, conscious personality, and on the level of the unconscious layers in the human being, in which forces can become so violently active that they eliminate all a person's independent judgment and action.

Becoming gnostically conscious only under certain conditions

A human being only becomes aware of the spiritual world,

and his longing for unification with God is only fulfilled, when he can eliminate the I-centred needs of the natural personality in the world of the senses. But it is also necessary for him to eliminate the inclinations active in the subconscious, which can disrupt human independence: megalomania, self-deification, power, states of intoxication, fanaticism and delusions, as they may emerge, for example, in states of psychosis.

Generally, such tendencies can only be overcome with the help of the powers of the spiritual world. This is why Gnosis is not only attaining consciousness of the spiritual world and the longing to be united with it, but at the same time it is also the condition for attaining this consciousness: the victory of the self over the I-centrality that appears in different forms, from exaggerated personal desires to paranoid self-deification.

It may happen that people, in their longing for unification with the Spirit, overlook the condition of giving up their I-centrality and want to enter this world of the Spirit with their limited I. It may also happen that they give up their limited I, but only for the benefit of the forces in their subconscious. In this case, they confuse the world of the Spirit with the mighty forces in their subconscious. In this way, the inclinations to self-deification, fanaticism and illusion gain power over them, while they believe they have entered the world of the Spirit. Nothing is further from the truth.

Another condition for attaining consciousness of the world of the Spirit is the Knowledge that the world of the Spirit is a world with its own laws. The sensory world and the world of unconscious forces are subjected to other laws and can, therefore, never belong to, or become equal to, the world of the Spirit. At best, they can reflect it. The condition is that the world of the Spirit takes shape *in* human beings. Then they

will also be able to shape the outside world according to their inner one.

Many people, however, filled with the longing for unification with the spiritual world, overlook the fact that this unification has to take shape *within* them. Due to their lack of patience, they project the laws of the world of the Spirit outwardly, on the outside world, and try to bend these laws to their own ideas.

The background of political ideologies

These two factors: firstly, confusing life in the world of the Spirit with megalomania and self-deification, and secondly, projecting the longing for the world of the Spirit on the outside world, are the foundations of political ideologies.

The human being imagines himself to be the Lord of Fate and its world. He deifies himself, without recognising that the fulfilment of his longing is only possible by eliminating his inclination to deification. And, on the basis of his longing for the world of the Spirit, he designs secular models of social structures that correspond with assumed freedom, equality and love, which can only be realised in the world of the Spirit. The desire for a life based on truth, justice and freedom behind such social designs, is justified. This desire stems from the true self that wants to develop. But when the inner conditions regarding the consciousness are not present, all efforts to build such social structures will fail. The designers of such models, and those who want to put them into practice, usually neglect these conditions. Instead of developing their inner true self, from which a corresponding external order is able to develop, human beings believe that by only changing the circumstances, their deepest longing can be fulfilled. Human beings project the perfection of the true Self

outwardly onto new, future social structures without being prepared to accomplish a fundamental change of their being. And, as human beings are unable and unwilling to vivify new ideal social structures without having changed themselves, attempts are often made to force them to do so, by persuasion or by violence. This is the hallmark of totalitarian systems. But the conditions regarding the consciousness cannot intentionally, or by using violence, be created. They can only develop in freedom.

Projection on earthly humanity

The concrete totalitarian ideological systems of the past can only be understood on this theoretical basis, because these systems, fascism and communism, cannot primarily be explained by social, scientific and political shortcomings. Poverty and lack of freedom, social insecurity and national resentments have certainly played an important role in their emergence and expansion, and have partly supplied the mental energy for their development.

However, the key factor is the longing for the realisation of the true human identity, which is the motive behind such ideologies. It is people's primordial longing that explains the very impact of these movements, and which enables us to understand the enthusiasm, the total surrender of those, who are certainly not bad or evil, but rather very good people, who, at least initially, supported these movements. But such systems point this longing in the wrong direction and abuse it.

The new human being, the truly spiritual human being, can only develop within the structures and forces of the Spirit, when all I-centrality and all expectations that a paradise might emerge from the physical world, disappear. Instead,

totalitarian systems try to build the «new society» with «new people», with earthly human beings, and within the context of this earthly world.

They project the spiritual *community* of people living from the Spirit in earth-oriented communities. One system expects absolute human unity from a «national and blood community», hence from biological similarities. Another system wants to realise absolute justice, freedom and equality in a «classless society», particularly through scientific and social relationships.

Totalitarian systems project the spiritual human being, living on the basis of spiritual laws and forces, on the earthly human being. In a «national and blood community» – of a biological nature – this «new human being» is the person of pure race, who follows his «unsullied», natural instincts, fighting outsiders, and a «comrade of the people» within the group. In a «classless society» – with a socio-economic uniting factor – the new human being, in international solidarity with all other proletarians, is a free «proletarian», who manages the means of production in the right way.

Such projections develop an immense power, because they are nourished by an innate longing for the true self and for a community in the Spirit. However, they must inevitably fail, because the earthly-directed human being will never turn into a new human being, just as the community of earthly human beings can never become a new community of the Spirit.

Systems that do not achieve the way of the Gnosis are not gnostic

What then, remains of the idea that political ideologies

should be of a «gnostic origin»? The deepest root of human activity is the longing for reunification of the spiritual nucleus in a human being with his Fatherland, the spiritual world. In this respect, ideologies are «gnostic», because they are based on the deepest human longing. But then all religions and the creations of science, philosophy and the arts are also gnostic. Yet, the reunification of the human being with God is only possible through a well-defined plan, which imposes certain conditions on human beings. The human I-centrality must be removed, both on the personal level and in the realms of the subconscious. The longing should not be vented in such a way that a person changes his outward behaviour before his inner being has changed. Hence, Gnosis is not only the aim of the reunification with the Spirit, but also the path to it with its absolute requirements. Systems that do not know this path, can consequently not be considered gnostic. On the contrary, they are a-gnostic, because self-deification and the projection of the spiritual world on an earthly paradise are the very obstacles to gnostic experiences.

Yet, the task of the realisation of the true human being and a community that is the expression of it, remains unchanged. This continues to be the task for humanity, even if it is often wrongly understood and we often try to accomplish it on the wrong level and by the wrong means. The fact that the ideological efforts have thoroughly failed and the true human task has been seemingly discredited, should not result in a situation wherein this task is suppressed or even neglected. We should, rather, recognise *how* it should be accomplished. And the failed efforts clearly demonstrate in which way it cannot be accomplished.

[1] For example: Eric Voegelin, «Die neue Wissenschaft von der Politik» (The new science of politics).

13

Gnosis is universal truth

In this Trigonum Igneum, the threefold Logos, the primordial triad of divine Love, reason and action, is realised.

What a person perceives, he believes to be the truth. The nature of this truth, its relativity or absoluteness, is determined by the nature of our power of observation. This power of observation is linked to a certain organ of perception. If a human being perceives the absolute centre of the Universe, the highest all-encompassing God, the central spiritual sun, then this is the highest insight and the universal truth.

This original truth or Gnosis stems from perceiving the absolute deity, and the recognition of the Universal Spirit in the inner heart and head sanctuaries. Whoever wants to receive the Gnosis, wants to perceive the Universal Spirit, needs a principle that is suitable to attract these radiations. Such a wonderful principle, capable of perceiving the highest God, is potentially present in every human being.

In the Spiritual School of the Rosycross, this principle is called the *Rose of the heart* or the *Spirit-spark atom*. It is capable of receiving the radiations of the spiritual sun in a weakened form and of passing them on via the blood and the nerve fluid. In the head, we can find the pineal gland, an organ that is

also called the *jewel in the lotus* or the *divine eye*. It has the ability to reflect the radiations of the spiritual sun, received by the heart, in the consciousness with the help of words, so that human beings can consciously perceive the universal truth.

The Gnostic testifies to the Spiritual Sun

Thus the human being is enabled to receive the seven radiations of light and sound emanating from the Universal Spirit by the close cooperation of heart and head, and to perceive them with his conscioušness. Whoever is able to receive and perceive the light and the power of the spiritual sun, with the help of the Spirit-Soul principle, knows the Gnosis. He is a Gnostic. The Spirit-Soul princǐple testifies to this high divine reality.

Vibrations of light and sound, received and perceived in this way, are manifested through characters – word images – as pure *vessels* for the benefit of other people. The Word is vivified. It is a gnostic symbol testifying of the eternal God, who wants to manifest himself to humanity.

The light shines in the darkness

The natural human being's powers of observation are inadequate and cannot perceive the Universal Spirit. But God's will is manifested in all cosmoses and microcosms. The eternal Mother-Father heart of the macrocosm wants to shine in the hearts of cosmoses and microcosms alike, and be recognised as the eternal sun of the All-manifestation. This power allows itself to be caught in human beings as the Living Word, as the Logos, so that this perception and recognition can occur in a creature. The all-encompassing spiritual sun is the centre of the macrocosm and cannot be perceived with our human sensory organs. Yet, at the same time, the macrocosmic centre is also the absolute centre of the latent light-power focal point in every microcosm.

«You are in me. And I am in you,» the Spirit says. In this way, the Father-Mother heart of the macrocosmic sun vibrates in the heart as a latent spiritual microcosmic sun, as the Son of God. The Son sacrifices himself. The spiritual sun allows its sublime radiation to be captured in the limited word images of earthly humanity, and waits until the highest truth can be perceived and understood. There have always been witnesses and testimonies to the fact that the knowledge of the Universal Spirit has attuned itself to the consciousness of the earthly human being and has been expressed in word and deed. The spiritual sun has unceasingly projected its impulses into the human life field in order to lead all nations to the eternal truth, through the living word.

The one Truth is like a crystal with many sides

There have always been microcosms in which a mature Spirit-Soul has been ready to receive the radiations of the spiritual sun and transform them into words and deeds as a testimony for all races and nations, which, at a certain moment, needed a new impulse of the divine truth. In all world religions, holy writings and legends from the present and past, we encounter such impulses of the eternal Spirit, expressed in various garments of word, form and symbol. In the Gospel of the Holy Twelve we can read:

The One Truth has many sides, and one sees one side only, another another, and some see more than others, according as it is given to them. Behold this crystal: how the one light is manifest in twelve faces, yea four times twelve, and each face reflects one ray of light, and one regards one face, and another another, but it is the one crystal, and the one light that shines in all. [...] God gives you all Truth, as a ladder with many steps, for the salvation and perfection of the soul, and the truth which seems today, you will abandon for the higher truth of the morrow. Press you unto Perfection. [1]

I am the light of the world

In the Christianity that was developing in the West, knowledge of the Universal Spirit was designated by the Greek word *Gnosis*. Numerous people, who had become susceptible to the *light of the world* by opening their souls to it, have given gnostic testimony to the Universal Spirit, which is perceived in Christ Jesus, the Son, and to the power of the Holy Spirit. To them, Jesus is the prototype of the human being who receives and perceives the eternal Spirit in his innermost depth, and unites with it through the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus manifests the Father to humanity and says: «I am the light of the world» or «I am the way, and the truth, and the life», then this testimony is certainly not linked to an historical figure. Wherever the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Paraclete, sets hearts ablaze, the light of the world is conveyed to humanity.

But as long as the heart cannot yet be ignited, because the Spirit-Soul principle is still dormant, the light of the world is perceived as an authority, and God as a person. The knowledge concerning God, Gnosis, is then wrongly understood. Then the highest truth of the universal sun, which has become flesh and blood in a human being, and has sacrificed himself for humanity in the living word, cannot be perceived. Those in whom the spiritual soul has not yet been awakened, do not want a spiritual god. They want a god perceptible to the senses, a personified authority they can obey and before whom they can respectfully kneel. Thus the testimonies to gnostic experiencing have usually been interpreted as dogma or a cult of a personalised god.

Consequently, the truth was not only crucified in human beings two thousand years ago, but also at every moment since. The soul has been constantly robbed of the light of the Spirit. According to the Gospel of the Pistis Sophia, the light

power of the Sophia was used and abused by the archons, until the Sophia accomplished her songs of repentance.

The three principles of perception

The Gnosis speaks of three fundamental states of consciousness. In «The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia», Jan van Rijckenborgh says: «The ancient Gnostics divided humanity into three types: pneumatics, psychics, and hylics.

Pneumatics are those who, from inner conscious recognition, rush straight towards the Christ light as soon as it appears to their consciousness, and they embrace it immediately. This is the type of person in whom the golden rose is blossoming, or at least is in the process of doing so. This is the type of person with the open window through which the gnostic fullness can fill the empty space.

Psychics are people of whom it can be said that they can only have faith in the light. Just like all the faithful we know so well from the Bible, they see the light of liberation only in the distance. The soul window in these people is still tightly shut and hence the manifestation of the light and its activity has to be constantly explained to them. The language of the heavens has to be translated for them, so that it becomes somewhat comprehensible. And then they believe in it from within. They can do so because the rose of the heart is active in them. By means of this active white rose, the gnostic rays can touch these people and actualise a state in which faith, real pure faith in the Gnosis, becomes possible.

Hylics are people who are totally unsusceptible. They are true nature people, totally attuned to dialectical nature. They live, not only out of the light, but out of the power that is released by the chain reaction of the processes of life. If these people

do possess a rose heart, then it is not active in them. The Gnosis never appears to such people and so we can leave them outside of our discussion. They are excluded from any kind of gnostic intervention and, in any case, they would not want such intervention.»[2]

The pneumatic is the human being who has made his hylic and psychic principles totally subservient to the Spirit-Soul. If the pneumatic principle is no longer negatively influenced, but is opened through self-knowledge and longing for salvation, it is able to assimilate the pneuma. To the extent that the hylic and psychic organisms are no longer an obstacle, but give themselves up to serve humbly and voluntarily, the spiritual breath can be inhaled into the heart. It penetrates into the pineal gland in the head and is taken up into a new circuit, into the serpent fire. Through the inflow of the pneuma, the wonderful alchemical process of transfiguration is accomplished in seven phases of development. If this new circuit of pneumatic forces has been stabilised in the system without any further intervention of the hylic and psychic organisms, then the pineal fire circle in the head can become immediately open to the radiations of the pneuma. The new pneumatic sensory system, the Spirit-Soul consciousness, has been born. The Spirit-Soul human being can, just as the prototype Jesus, recognise God the Father within him because, he himself, is known by God the Father. The Spirit-Soul consciousness can say: «The eternal Father-Mother and I are one.»

Only the immortal can perceive immortality

In this context, we can read in the Gospel of Philip:

It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that exist unless he becomes like them. This is not the way with persons in the world: he sees the sun without being a sun; and he sees the heaven and the earth and all other things, but he is

not these things. This is quite in keeping with the truth. But you saw something of that place and you became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ. You saw the Father, you shall become Father. So in this place you see everything and do not see yourself, but in that place you do see yourself – and what you see you shall become.[3]

The Gnosis of the triune God

God is the highest reason, the purest love, the inviolable will. The harmonic primordial trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is an eternal spiritual law. The Father is the primordial source, the spiritual sun of the macrocosm, from which all life emanates. The Son is the living word of Christ, which kindles in human beings the divine insight that pierces them in their spiritless world like a sword, and wants to lead them to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the pneuma, the living power of the Spirit, which realises the true life in a human being. In order for this primordial trinity of the eternal spiritual law to be vivified in human beings, their dialectical thinking, feeling and acting have to learn to be silent, to serve and to make themselves subservient. They should *be born of God, die in Jesus and be reborn through the Holy Spirit*, so that they can become a perfect new trinity. This trinity then radiates as a fiery triangle: the Trigonum Igneum. In this Trigonum Igneum, the threefold Logos is realised, the primordial triad of divine love, reason and action.

Undivine imperfection, the imperfect forces, characterise the earthly world because the third pole is lacking in the hylic and psychic human consciousness. The top of the triangle is missing. The conscious link with the absolute God does not exist, and this is the great goal to which humanity should be awakened. Only when the pneumatic principle in a human being

is awakened and can develop freely, as a rosebud in the morning dawn, we can speak of the *redemption by Christ*. Then the highest dimension of the Universe, the all-liberating Christ consciousness, as a trinity, surrenders to humanity.

This gift is the *charisma* of the Gnostics, which is united with the *agapé* (the unselfish love) and with the *sophia* (the divine wisdom) in order to accomplish the purpose of creation in microcosm and macrocosm, in the holy triad of forces.

1 The Gospel of the Holy Twelve, Chapter 90: 3,4,10.

2 Jan van Rijckenborgh, The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia (to be published in 2005), chapter 45. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 2005.

3 The Gospel of Philip, from The Nag Hammadi Library in English. E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1984.

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